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ACTIVISION



Thou shalt kill

APOCALYPSE

The end begins this Fall.

SONY PLAYSTATION • SEGA SATURN • NINTENDO 64 • NEO GEO • M2 • SNES • GENESIS • ARCADE

GAMEFAN

NEXT GI

VIDEO GAME MAGAZINE

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 7
JULY 1997

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:
TIME CRISIS
ACE COMBAT 2
BLASTO
SKULL MONKEYS
FORMULA 1 '97
TOP GEAR RALLY
LOST WORLD
ARMORED CORE
CROC
CRASH 2

SATURN EXCLUSIVES!
WIPEOUT 2097
RESIDENT EVIL



FIRST HANDS-ON
PREVIEW!
APOCALYPSE
STARRING BRUCE
WILLIS



CRYSTAL DYNAMICS'
POWER DUO!!

GEX
ENTER
THE GECKO
AND PANDEMOMIUM 2
SERIOUS SEQUELS!!



07 >

FIRST PICS: TOMB RAIDER 2

PLUS: GAMEFAN TALKS TO THE CREATORS OF BATMAN & ROBIN,
FINAL FANTASY VII, SPAWN AND NUCLEAR STRIKE!!

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Recently, we had cause to dust off our extensive 16-bit archive. Prompted by our "Games That Need Sequels" feature on page 20. What began as a brief interlude quickly became an exercise in gameplay comparison. Days were spent playing nothing but 16 bit classics. Within hours, the visual boundaries melted away, and gameplay took center stage. We were forced to deal with complex patterns and timing situations, elaborate level design and formidable bosses that took forever to defeat.

We came away with the conclusion that while hardware has evolved greatly in a relatively short amount of time, game design, for the most part, has not. And also, that today's games are a lot more forgiving. Are designers and programmers wrestling so hard jamming in maximum polygons and cinemas that they're beginning to overlook the basic principles that parked us behind home consoles in the first place?

There are some cases where relative game play exists, Tomb Raider and SM64, for instance, showcased stunning 3D play mechanics. But for the most part it seems that the genres which have benefited most from the 32/64 bit explosion have been Fighters, Sports, and RPGs. Being that the basic premise of each can only evolve so far, added graphics and AI have been enough to vault them into next gen status, but in the case of the platformer, adventure and action RPG categories, graphic overhauls have not been met with sorely needed gameplay innovations.

"graphic over hauls have not been met with sorely needed game play innovations."

So, will the upcoming E3 mark the beginning of 3D supremacy, the continuing resurgence of 2D, or a healthy coalition of both?

A glance at some of this year's main attractions certainly lends itself to the 3rd scenario. Gex 2, Tomb Raider 2, Crash 2, Spawn, Blasto, Croc, Sonic, Dracula 3D, Goemon 5, and MegaMan Neo are just some of this year's formidable crop of big budget 3D games, but the 2D category will have strong representation as well, with such gems as Castlevania Symphony of the Night, SkullMonkeys, Yuke Yuke

Trouble makers, MegaMan X4, Yoshi's Island 64 and hopefully Silhouette Mirage.

If somehow the 2D games can manage to entice today's gamers as much as 3D ones do, and 3D games exhibit the clever design of those 2D classics, well, then, I guess it'll be one helluva year. Join us next month for a complete run down of the Electronic Entertainment Expo.

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A METROPOLIS PUBLICATION

GameFan (ISSN 1062-7372), Volume 5, Issue 7, July 1997. Published monthly by Metropolis Publications Inc. 9570 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 120, Los Angeles, California 90024. One year subscription: \$23.95. Postage and handling and \$10 per year. Please remit in U.S. funds only. Please allow 4-6 weeks for your first issue. Post Office Postage Rates Paid at Los Angeles, CA and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send change of address form to GameFan, P.O. Box 100007, Los Angeles, CA 90010-0007.

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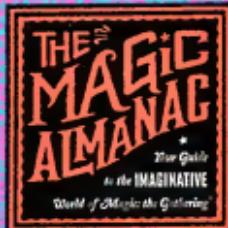
"...Ogre Battle has Solid Seller emblazoned on it."
(Video Game Advisor - April, 1997)

ATLUS



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AND STIMULATE THAT MUSHY THING BETWEEN



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into this handy compartment.

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STRUCTURE



Translated in nine languages, Magic can be played anywhere on earth. As for other locales, we're working on it.



Imagine, a game that relies on social interaction and brain power. What a novel idea!



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With Magic: The Gathering,
it's brains over brawn.



Each Magic card features artwork so vivid, you may actually feel its power. This is not always a good thing.



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To flee the monotony of everyday life, Magic is a wise alternative to the street luge.



On the \$1,000,000 Magic Pro Tour, winners walk away with big bucks. And a trail of adoring fame in tow.



Collectability is yet another fun aspect of Magic. Certain rare cards may fetch \$500 on the open market.

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The Gathering

Wizards

Looking for some mind candy? All you need is a deck of Magic cards, a worthy opponent and a functioning cerebrum. Unleash your intellectual insect! Sprout wings! Fly! Be free!

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ALBERT ODYSSEY

LEGEND OF ELDEAN



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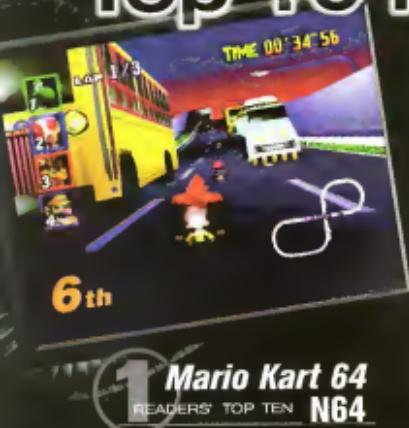
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Our address is 111

Top 10 Most Wanted

FOR THE WEEK ENDING 5/30/97



1 Mario Kart 64

READERS' TOP TEN

N64

1. Mario Kart 64 - N64
2. Tomb Raider - PS
3. Turok - N64
4. Resident Evil - PS
5. Super Mario 64 - N64

6. SoulBlade - PS
7. Suikoden - PS
8. Jet Moto - PS
9. Tekken 3 - PS
10. Wave Race - N64

READERS' MOST WANTED

1. Tomb Raider 2 - PS
2. Resident Evil 2 - PS
3. Final Fantasy VII - PS
4. Zelda 64 - N64
5. StarFox 64 - N64



6. Crash 2 - PS
7. Duke Nukem - SS
8. Tekken 3 - PS
9. Quake - SS
10. Lost World - PS

GAMEFAN EDITOR'S TOP TEN



READERS' TOP TEN

N64

1. Wild Arms - PS
2. Castlevania X - PS
3. Runabout - PS
4. Alundra - PS
5. Swagman - PS
6. Megaman 9 - PS
7. StarFox 64 - N64
8. VMX Racing - PS
9. Shining the Holy Ark - Saturn
10. Dynamite Headdy - GSN



EDITOR'S TOP TEN

Saturn

N64

1. Shining the Holy Ark - Saturn
2. Shining in the Darkness - GSN
3. Shining Force - Sega CD
4. Sega Rally Network - Saturn
5. Virtua On Network - Saturn
6. Gamma 2000 - PS
7. Total 2 - PS
8. Pay Pay - PS
9. Guardian Heroes - Saturn
10. Phantasy Star - SMS



EDITOR'S TOP TEN

PS

SS

1. GL Quake - PC w/3DFX
2. Broken Helix - PS
3. StarFox 64 - N64
4. Time Crisis - PS
5. MSH - Saturn
6. Fighters Megamix - Saturn
7. Shadow Warrior - PC
8. Street Fighter III - Arcade
9. Henry - Tamagotchi
10. Ghosts 'n Goblins - Arcade



EDITOR'S TOP TEN

Mac

PC

SMS

1. Isobal 2 - PS
2. Rally Cross - PS
3. Mario Kart 64 - N64
4. Warcraft II - Mac
5. Pay Pay - PS
6. Ace Combat 2 - PS
7. Jet Moto - PS
8. Cupboarders - PS
9. Rage Racer - PS
10. Blast Corps - N64



EDITOR'S TOP TEN

SNES

3DO

ZX Spectrum

1. Tokken 3 - Arcade
2. Parappa the Rapper - PS
3. Xross 2 - PS
4. Accel Combat 2 - PS
5. Slim Runner - Arcade
6. Super Mario Kart - SNES
7. StarFox 64 - N64
8. Eye of the Sun - PS
9. Blood - PC
10. 3D Monster Maze - 3DO



EDITOR'S TOP TEN

Saturn

SS

PS

3DO

1. Wild Arms - PS
2. Fighters Megamix - Saturn
3. Rage Racer - PS
4. StarFox 64 - N64
5. Virtua On Network - Saturn
6. Total 2 - PS
7. Megaman X4 - Saturn
8. Sonic Jam - Saturn
9. Pay Pay - PS
10. Gavels - GSN

WIN

THE GAME SYSTEM OF YOUR CHOICE! ENTER TODAY!

All you have to do is enter the drawing a while about a lot of your top 10 favorite games and the 10 games you need the most that aren't out yet, as a piece of paper or a postcard that send them to: GAMEFAN TOP TEN, 1131 Chestnut Jr., Suite 200 Agoura Hills, CA 91301

First Prize:

Your choice of a 3DO, VIRTUAL BOY, or N64.

Second Prize:

Your choice of one of the picks of the Month in Westpoint.

Third Prize:

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is last month's winner:

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Drawing is limited to one (1) entry per person per month. Drawings will be held on the 22nd of each month. The three (3) winners will be notified via mail and on our website. For complete list of rules and regulations visit GameFan Top Ten with self addressed & stamped envelope.

DEVELOPER'S TOP TEN

This Month's Guest:

Kev Shaw

Press & PR Manager, Eutechnyx(US)

1. Quake Deathmatch - PC

"Find your friends and get to know them."

2. Duke Nukem 3D - PC

"Duke is the King of Everything."

3. Manic Miner - ZX Spectrum*

"Great shooter and superb gameplay."

4. Tekken 2 - PS

"Excellent combat and superb graphics."

5. Gunstar Heroes - Genesis

"Excellent, engaging game design."

6. Defender - Arcade

"The King of Cool games."

7. International Karate+ - Amiga

"The Shogun of the beat 'em up."

8. Mega Bomberman - Genesis

"Five great levels."

9. Night Trap - Sega CD

"Night & Mouse cheer."

10. Jet-Pac - ZX Spectrum*

"Used to believe they used to produce games that were only 10k or so!"



*Note: The ZX Spectrum game is a port of the Amiga game. The Amiga game is a port of the original 1982 Spectrum game. The original Spectrum game was developed by Tim Worthington and published by Tim Worthington Software. The Amiga game was developed by Eutechnyx and published by Eutechnyx. The ZX Spectrum game was developed by Eutechnyx and published by Eutechnyx. The original Spectrum game was developed by Tim Worthington and published by Tim Worthington Software. The Amiga game was developed by Eutechnyx and published by Eutechnyx. The ZX Spectrum game was developed by Eutechnyx and published by Eutechnyx.

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-GameFan

"Swagman's dream-like graphics and involving gameplay will capture the player's imagination!"

-PS Extreme



SwagMan

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Hocus Pocus

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HOCUS POCUS DESIGN BY REEDIE, WEST ANTHONY AND RO TREV WEST AWARDS



GXTV is the world's first video game TV with hyper-amplified sound and graphics. Enhance the thrill of gaming with adjustable speaker doors, stereo surround sound and a 15 watt sub woofer. Plus, the intense screen graphics will make you feel like your head's right inside the game. GXTV is also a 181-channel, 13" stereo TV with two A/V inputs, stereo headphone jack, backlit remote control and tilt/swivel stand. So whatcha waitin' for? Send in those codes and maybe you can win one of these GXTVs for yourself!

CONGRATULATIONS TO THIS MONTH'S WINNERS!

The mighty Monitaur seeks the finest cheats, secrets and tips known to humanity, and we need them from YOU! We'll look over all the coders you send and award a magnificent Grand Prize every single month! Remember, no cheap codes from previously published US magazines! Winners will be drawn each month and displayed in the only place where cheaters prosper. (Current subscribers who win a subscription will receive a one-year extension.)

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AND LETTERS TO:
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SAN DIEGO, CA

THIRD PRIZE WINNER:

CHRIS GROSS
MARTINEZ, CA



FIGHTERS MEGAMIX

Extra Options, Mini Game



EXTRA OPTIONS

Hyper mode - Defeat 11 or more opponents in Survival mode to unlock Hyper Mode!
No Damage - Fight 500 rounds
Play as Chop - After turning on your Saturn 30 times w/FNM, pick Kunachan with X or Z
Play as School Girl Candy - Pick Candy with X or Z
Play as Viper Siba - Pick Siba with X or Z
F-14 Fly By - Set your background to Vipers B.M. then have both players hold down X as the round begins.
Kunachan Face - Set your background to Vipers B.M. then both players choose Kunachan!

MINI GAME OF PATIENCE

Clear your game data and beat paths A through H in 1P Mode (but not 1A). Then go to Training Mode and get OKs next to 1800 moves or more. Finally, return to 1P mode and select course 1, holding down L. Match the pictures.



DRACULA X

Richter's Lucky Armor!



Once you have properly beaten this incredible game (including the mirror upside down castle), start a new file and enter one of these names. RICHTER - Play the game as Richter Belmont! AXEARMOR - You get an 'interesting' suit of armor. X-X-V'Q - Weak strength, but insane luck!



TOBAL 2

Size 'em up!



When selecting your character press and hold L2 and R2. Then while playing press L2 to shrink your character and R2 to grow. And the frame rate doesn't change!!!

Also beat the game on Easy, Normal or Hard to play as the bosses.

Press and hold A, B, C, or X during the replay to select a win pose.



LOOKOUT!





STARFOX

KNIGHTMARE'S MINI STRATEGY GUIDE



AREA 6
Use the quick bomb destruction technique right at the end of the stage in the ice field to get 40 hits straight away. Shoot the pinned space stations for 40 hits each and at the end of the level shoot the star cruiser's control towers to down them for 40 hits each.

300



VENOM
The easiest way to get a medal on this planet is to get the level path to the base and then just get the energy blocks as quickly as possible. If you've lost enough you'll get 40 hits for each of them. When fighting Andross, break out his bonds and then shoot the materials he's at you to add on to your energy and break copy.

200



BOLSE OFFENSE STATION
You get 3 hits for every power generator you take out. Also, the quicker you shoot down the Starwolf team, the more points you get. Try to get the most hits you can. The energy of three enemies will get you the last and you can salt them off with one lock on blast.

150



REGION 2
Stop off six of the guided missiles from killing the Great Fox. The deck is built by the deckers, so if you break it, then you'll have to start again. You have to repair the Great Fox to repair your Arwing and refill your energy. If you're going for the medal, DON'T on Bridge Access, as it will destroy one of your energy tanks, then take off away from your base.

100



MACBETH
As you approach the base area (past the checkpoint), you want about all right of the metal targets with swords on them. Then when you approach the board with eight green lights, shoot all the swords in the middle.

150



TITANIA
The mines do not give you hits, so don't shoot them. The energy blocks give +30 hits each. Most of your hits will come from the air, so keep those energy blocks flying. Use them bonds when there are no energy blocks, as they will slow down a lot.

150



ZONNER
You have to shoot all the floating energy lights. If you enter one, the light's color will turn red, indicating that you will not be going to Sector 2. Let off with all your bombs on this stage, as you can refill on the base.

250



SOLAR
Get off the energy blocks. For the bomb, focus where the groups of birds are and use a bombing bomb to nail them all. Also it sometimes pays to fire a beam into the lava waves as occasionally you will destroy things behind them that you couldn't normally hit.

100



SECTOR X
After the checkpoint, when the level splits, get the energy blocks. For the bomb, after the checkpoint, you will come across a series of hanging rectangular boundaries in the sky. Shoot them and they will eventually open up. Fly through all these and you will warp to a second zone and then Sector 2.

150



AQUA
You must pilot your sub through all of the rock arches on the level. There are several at the beginning, and then one at the end after you leave the valley with the starfish and electric triangles.

150



KATINA
Destroy the alien motherships before the force runs down and protect your pyramid base. To get the medal shoot a lock on. Most of the groups of alien ships that chase 80 hits each. Also shoot the motherships for 80 hits for 40 hits each.

150



CORLUNA
You must defeat all the alien hordes. Starwulf will be to the left of them. They cannot be harmed by bombs or laser-like shots so use the energy blocks to get rid of them. Power 2 or 3 lasers will give you hits for a super light arc. The colder they kill, the more hits you get.

50



SECTOR Y
Just get a 100+ hits. Simple. Use the quick bomb destruction technique (no bomb button again after you launch a bomb) to avoid the otherwise invincible enemies. When the level splits, go up for more hits.

150



METEO
Just get a 100+ hits. Simple. Use the quick bomb destruction technique (no bomb button again after you launch a bomb) to avoid the otherwise invincible enemies. When the level splits, go up for more hits.

200



CORISIA
Milla Fox is attacked by alien hordes. You have to take them all out before they kill him. Then as you reach the end of the level, defeat the boss from the first level of the original Starfox and you will be taken to Sector 2.

150

MEDALS

As you can see by the map, each planet has a number in the corner. That's the minimum number of hits you need to score to receive a medal for that planet. Note that you will not be awarded a medal unless ALL of your wingmen are alive at the end of the stage.

YOUR PRIZE
Get a medal on all 15 planets and you will be rewarded with a graphic equalizer on the sound test, tanks in the four player Vs mode, and a more difficult 'Extra' mode of play. Complete the game on the hardest route in Extra mode and you'll be rewarded with characters on foot in the Vs model!!

RAGE RACER
Mirror, Mirror...



After selecting "Race Start," press and hold **L1 + R1 + Select + Start** until the race begins and the track will be mirrored.

Pause the game at any time and press and hold **▲** then **L1** or **R1** to toggle your rear view mirror on and off.



WAR GODS
Lotsa Cool Stuff!

CHEAT MENU:
On the screen where it says "Midway presents War Gods," enter this sequence: Right, Right, Right, B, B, A, A. The screen should flash if done correctly. Now under Options there should be a new option: Cheat Menu.

FREE PLAY:
At title screen enter:
Left C, Left C, Right (D-pad), A, B, Up C, Right, C

PLAY AS GROK:
At the character select screen press Down, Right, Left, Left, Up, Down, Right, Up, Left, Left, and choose any character.

PLAY AS EXOR:
At the character select screen: Left, Down, Down, Right, Left, Up, Left, Up, Right, Down, and choose any character.

SONIC 3D BLAST
Cheat Mode



Are you very bad? Would you like to skip through levels of Sonic 3D Blast all willy nilly? Here's all you have to do. Hold **C** as you press Start for a new game. During the game, pause and press **A** to skip acts, **B** to skip stages, and **C** to go straight to the last level. Press **Y** for medals, **X** for extra guys, and **Z** for continues. Shame on you.



MECH WARRIOR 2
Numerous Codes



Enter these codes at the Password screen:
Extra Heat Sinks:
X X O / A 4 > Y +
Jump Jets:
Y X O / A > Y O L
Cruise Throttle:
A X O / A 4 Y Y A
Unlock Missions:
T < X O / A X A < =
Overweight 'Mechs:
O X O / A > O /
Extra Variance:
T # X O / < A X < <
More Arms:
T O X O / A X > T U
Invincibility:
X O / A > < U Z
New "Elemental" Chassis:
T / X O / A Z > # *
New "Terantulus" Chassis:
/ X O / A 4 < L Y



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NINTENDO⁶⁴



N64



Win 95



Win 95



Win 95



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FINAL FANTASY VII

BEHIND THE SCENES REPORT

GameFan recently visited Square's newly opened Honolulu office to discuss Final Fantasy VII with five of the game's key creators.

INTERVIEW #1

Hironobu Sakaguchi

President of Square USA, Inc.

Brief Profile: Since the establishment of Square (previously Denya Co., Ltd.), Mr. Sakaguchi has been involved in game production, and in 1987, he released the first title of the Final Fantasy series. Mr. Sakaguchi was the producer for all the Final Fantasy games that followed and he now works as the Senior Chief Executive of all game development.



"FFVII will be a completely new story, based on completely different characters."

Kazuyuki Hashimoto

Planning and Character Design

TETSUYA NOMURA

"...I am working on new monsters for the American version of FFVII. There will be at least two new 'Weapons' (monsters)."

Q: What was your reason behind opening up an office in LA and Honolulu?

HS: As you know from looking at FFVII, we use quite a lot of high end computer graphics, and most of the talent pool for that field is in the United States, particularly Hollywood.

QF: There were some rumors about an extra quest on the third disk planned concerning the resurrection of a certain character, and that it never happened due to time constraints. Do you have any comments regarding this rumor?

HS: I am familiar with that rumor, and I'm afraid that it's not true. (Laughs...) I thought you were going to ask about the N64 version of FFVII, which is another rumor that I hear often.

QF: Are there any future plans for a version of Final Fantasy on any Nintendo platform? Maybe the 64DD?

HS: No.

QF: Are you completely satisfied with the way FFVII turned out?

HS: In retrospect, I think everyone looks back at places where the game could have been improved, but overall I am happy with the way it turned out. However, with the release of the America version,

thank we have been able to make substantial improvements in the game.

QF: Tell us about the American version?

HS: One of our main goals with FFVII was to make sure that it was a success in the United States. I was surprised at how many Americans liked FFVII, and I wanted to make FFVII even more popular. So it wouldn't suffice just to convert the game, we actually had to make substantial improvements.

QF: What improvements?

HS: We added two more bosses toward the end of the game and the Materia System has been changed to make it more user friendly. The enemy encounter rates have also been adjusted so the story line and

HIRONOBU SAKAGUCHI

President of Square USA, Inc.

"I wanted to make FFVII even more popular. So it wouldn't suffice just to convert the game, we actually had to make substantial improvements."



Kazuyuki Hashimoto

"I am currently working on the Final Fantasy film project."



battles are more balanced. Also at certain points you'll have bosses with weaknesses that are hard to work out, and we've added hint messages to aid the player.

QF: How do you view the American gaming scene with regards to RPGs?

HS: Up till now RPGs have been considered as too complicated for the American audience. I think that their complexity has affected their popularity. But there have been significant visual developments in games, and I hope this will help FFVII to grab the attention of the American audience, maybe even those who aren't predisposed towards RPGs. Then, once they take a look at the game, they will see its merits and hopefully be drawn into its world. I think FFVII could well be the game to help build the market for RPGs.

QF: Are there any plans to make a PC version of FFVII?

HS: Yes, we plan to make PC versions of FFV, FFVI, and FFVII. Of course, porting takes a long time, so it will be approximately a year until the PC versions are available.

QF: You have spent a lot of time building this game series on various gaming platforms. What drew you

menting to you?

HS: Well, there really isn't any deep meaning to it, we just wanted to make a character that would appear in various forms in all the games. I guess I've always had a soft spot for that type of character. Cid is like Yoda from the Star Wars series—very intelligent and wise.

QF: When will FFVII be finished?

HS: Sometime next year.

QF: Have any Hollywood studios approached you about making a major motion picture based on the Final Fantasy series?

HS: I am actually in negotiations with several studios right now, but I can't disclose any information at this time.

QF: Can you tell us anything about the movie at all?

HS: It will be a full computer graphic motion picture along the lines of Toy Story—we've even recruited some of the staff who worked on Toy Story. The next phase is to make an amalgamation between the game and the movie. Hopefully, we'll be able to achieve this on the next generation of console systems, so it will be about 4 years before we actually start realizing some of our long time goals.

INTERVIEW #2

Kazuyuki Hashimoto

Vice President of Research & Development

Brief Profile: Mr. Hashimoto was the CG Programmer for Final Fantasy VII, responsible for the development of the 3D CG system programming tools for the PlayStation, and also the animation data conversion.

GF: Have you been involved in any of the other Final Fantasy games?

KH: No, I joined the Square team about two years ago.

GF: What about the current and future Final Fantasy projects, will you be involved with those?

KH: I am currently working on the Final Fantasy film project, which will probably take us two or three years to complete.

GF: Will it contain any characters from Final Fantasy VII?

KH: No, it will be totally different from Final Fantasy VII. It will be a totally new design.

GF: Will the movie based on the new Final Fantasy game that is currently in the works?

KH: We haven't reached that stage of planning yet. We're still just trying to make a truly realistic 3D

Y/N: For the city of Midgar, I worked with five artists total—two manual designers and three computer graphic designers. For Junon, I worked with one other person.

GF: Do you come from a background of manual art or computer generated art?

YN: My specialty is in manual art.

GF: Are there any artists, specifically Japanese artists, that influence your work?

YN: There is one Japanese artist that has influenced my work—Katsuhiko Otomo.

GF: What other video games have you worked on?

YN: I worked on FFVII and I also did a little work on Chrono Trigger.

GF: How long did it take to complete FFVII from start to finish?

YN: From the initial brainstorm, it took about three years to complete.

INTERVIEW #4

Tetsuya Nomura

Planning and Character Design

Brief Profile: After overseeing the monster designs for Final Fantasy V, Mr. Nomura was responsible for

Y/N: As long as there is paper, a mechanical pencil and an eraser, I'll be fine.

GF: What is your favorite character in FFVII?

TN: Cloud and Sephiroth.

GF: Do you know why Vincent or Yuffie were not in the ending CG?

TN: Because to have included both of them, we would have to make four different endings and we were constrained by the space on the CD, so we decided not to include them.

INTERVIEW #5

Nobuo Uematsu

Music Composer

Brief Profile: Mr. Uematsu joined Square after working as a freelance composer, where he composed tunes for many television commercials. He has since composed and directed all the music for the Final Fantasy series. In addition, Mr. Uematsu continues to compose and produce game music CDs.

GF: Has the FFVII soundtrack been selling well in Japan since the release?

NU: Yes, it hit #3 in the Japanese music charts for all



Square headquarters, Hawaii

YUSUKE NAORA Chief of Graphics

"The initial idea might be a word or a phrase from the director or character designer, and from that I work with other designers to create the worlds."



Square Headquarters, Hawaii



NOBUO UEMATSU Music Composer

"This is the first time that music from a game has placed in the hit charts, so I am very proud of that."

character in CG!

GF: What games have you worked on besides Final Fantasy VII?

KH: Recently I worked for a company making the computer graphics for a game called Motor Toon GP. The game has deformation graphics; I made the tool that allowed for the deformation of the cars.

the creation of several new characters in Final Fantasy VII. In Final Fantasy VII, Mr. Nomura was both in charge of character design and the game's ending.

GF: Who are your influences?

TN: There is not just one influence, my work is mostly based on my past experiences.

GF: What is your favorite monster in FFVII?

TN: It's You and Yang in the Shin-Ra mansion.

GF: How do you come up with the monsters in FF?

TN: First I think about the attacks of the monsters, then I base it on relationships with living things.

GF: Are you working on the next Final Fantasy game?

TN: Not right now, I am working on the new monsters for the American version of FFVII.

GF: How many new monsters are there going to be?

TN: There will be at least two new Weapons (monsters).

GF: Did you work with Yoshitaka Amano at all, or will he be working on any future projects?

YN: Yes, Mr. Amano contributed to FFVII and as long as Final Fantasy continues Mr. Amano will be involved.

GF: Do you come from a background of manual art or computer generated art?

types of music and it has sold over 200,000 copies. This is the first time that music from a game has placed in the hit charts, so I am very proud of that.

GF: What was it like switching from cartridge to CD?

NU: It became much easier for me. On the SNES we had only eight sound channels, but on PlayStation we have twenty-four sound channels. The sound quality is much better.

GF: Are you working on both the new Final Fantasy game and the movie project?

NU: I am unable to work on the movie project or the new Final Fantasy because I am working on a new project that I can't discuss at this time.

GF: Do you have any musical influences that have inspired the music of FFVII?

NU: I am inspired by all kinds of music all over the world.

GF: Did you use any live instruments when you were composing the music for FFVII or was the music synthesized?

NU: When I began composing the music, I used both live instruments and synthesized music. Then, I put both types of music into the computer to create the game music.

GF: Where did you get your inspiration for the new worlds in FFVII?

YN: The initial idea might be a word or a phrase from the director or character designer, and from that I work with the other designers to create the worlds.

GF: How many other artists or graphic designers did you work with on FFVII?

GRAVEYARD SPECIAL FEATURE GAMES THAT NEED SEQUELS!



1. **Dynamite Headdy:** A testament to ingenious level design and play mechanics! Do it 2D and completely rendered. Headdy and the cast of marionettes would lend themselves perfectly to 3D rendered graphics. Imagine the walls falling in and out as the scenes changed and the insanity of Headdy's bosses, SGI rendered in 3D! The Japanese box art actually depicts such a scene. I know I'm dreaming, but wouldn't it be grand?

2. **Gooster Heroes:**

2D hand drawn SS!

3. **Strider:** Do it like *Paradise* on the PS and they will come!

4. **Bonk's Adventure:** Gotte be N64 min SM64 off the vinyl. Imagine chomping up cliffs and trees in 3D!

5. **Ranger X:** 2D era Clockwerk

Knight all the way. Multi-jointed, crouched, leaped and enemy characters stumped with lush, hand drawn scenery, rich with parallax, and all the FX you can muster. It'll fly off the shelves!

6. **Ninja Gaiden:** 2D hand drawn. Same small character and big levels filled with paramount challenge. Imagine what real weather effects and light sourcing would bring to this epic platformer!

7. **Splatterhouse:** Make it 3D era Crash (so you can slice and dice in both directions) while retaining super high quality textures. Don't forget the chainaw, end hood it-blondy!

8. **Act Raiser:** 2D hand drawn, of course. In the vein of *Castlevania X*. Find Yasa, knock him back to blin-sness and have him craft the joy sound track!

9. **Buttload-o's:** I don't care how you name it, just make it.

10. **Atomic Robo Kid:** Gotte go with the Crash Engine on this one too. Just mehn the tubes wider and taller, and add the ability climb and ascend within them. As in risen (or ascends) hmn the tree behind him ge transparent to view the action.

Sequels I'm happy about so far:
Castlevania X 3DS, this new 3D
Sonic (whatever it's called), Yoshi
64, SM64, Street Fighter EX Plus

Alpha, Bayonetta, Metal Gear, Zeld, and FF.



1. **Ghoul's 'n Ghouleyes:** I want to see Ghoul's 'n Ghouleyes an Capcom's CPS3 hardware! It would be a 2D extravaganza with level design influenced by all three *GG* games. Gamplay would be a mixtura of *Ghoul's 'n Ghouleyes* (vertical firing) and *Super Ghoul's 'n Ghouleyes* (the double jump). There would be multiple paths to Loka's castle, new weapons, new characters (play as Lancelot or Percival perhaps?) and new types of armor, including magic armor that lets you momentarily morph into other creatures like Zombies and Red Aramarsi! Also, the wizard would occasionally turn you into a random Capcom character! *sigh* if only...

2. **Gunner Heroes:** A 2.5D *Gonstar Heroes* with effects from the Gods!

3. **Sonic's** 32-bit 2D *Sonic* needs to exist. Kaap it pure, like *Sonic* and *Sonic CD*.

4. **Castle of Illusion:** A true 2D sequel on SS. Two player like *World of Illusion* only longer and harder. Oh yes!

5. **Y's Vanished Omens:** Eltar a compilation CD with updated graphics or an alt new Y's. I must have more!

6. **Final Fight:** Tha finest scrolling beat 'em up EVER needs a PROPER sequel. None of this SHES crap.

7. **Blank Commando:** You know, I'd settle for just an arcade-perfect port...

8. **Contra:** Konami did a true 2D 32-bit *Castlevania*, why not *Contra*?

9. **Total Carnage:** Am I alone in my love for this game? It needs a sequel!

10. **Shinobi:** A proper hand-drawn *Shinobi*, like *Revenge of Shinobi*. Thosa FMV sections have got to go.

Sequels I'm happy about so far:
Assault Suit Leynos, Castlevania, Metal Gear, FF, Thunderforce, Mario, Zeld, and StarFox



1. **Phantasy Star:** You better believe it baby. Imagine... PSV. Actually, don't imagine. You'll only get depressed. I know it's not happening, 'cause I recently

learned that the *Phantasy Star* character-designin' man, Yoshikazu, is doing touch-up work on the home version of *Last Iron*, or something. But think about it! *Phantasy Earth*, taking place after the *Alyssia III*, landed on "the third planet from the sun." Aheeh! Mustn't think about it! Too hardcore! Reiko "Phoenix" Reiko! Kodama, come bekkii

2. **Y's:** Now this one is kind of happening, with the *Falcom Classics Collection* on *Setum* and *Y's Eternia* on PC... but I went Y's. W-

3. **Monster World:** Ah, the *Monster World* series. Gone forever. Four of the best games ever made, truly.

Now all Compile mehies in *Puyo Puyo*. "Konnie Konnie Konne," indeed!

4. **Sorcerium:** This has to come back. Life isn't complete without Sorcerium. A remake of the original is coming for *Win'98*, but...

5. **Nectaria:** It's all about that sound when the next turn comes up... "bo-wahh..."

6. **Exile:** The *Crusads* rocked with hell in this series! This awesome PC Engine action RPG series is long gone. Amazingly, all of 'em came out in the US, even the *Genesis* *Exile*! Find them sommwhrre!

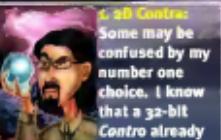
7. **Valis: Yuhoh!**

8. **Alex Kidd:** Where's the Kidd? He was infinitely cooler than Sonic. Jm, hm, pen!

9. **Seiken Densetsu:** Square still hasn't announced a *Seiken IV*! Whatup?? Whnn's Hehoh Khuhuh? Please, make it hand-drawn.

10. **Clash At Damanhead:** I know nobody remembers this one, but it was 100% NES action adventure skill game, and it was called "Big Bang" in Japan. Need nothrr enem Nutr! I KNOW I'm forgetting many important NES, MegaDrive and especially PC Engine games, but: n) It's very, very late... sayam. b) I didn't want to hwe too much overlap with other penguin end c) Wn wrra of course limited to ten titles.

Sequels I'm happy about so far:
Dracule X, *Street Fighter II*, *Final Fantasy VI*, *Lunar* (kind of... where's *III*?) *Tengai Makyo*, *Dragon Quest VI* (Wii's comin', heh...) *Megaman 7*, and so many more... no more especi



1. **3D Contra:** Some may be confused by my number one choice, I know that a 32-bit *Contra* already exists, but it's

difficult for me to accept the non-Konami developed, 3D *Contra: LOW* as a true update of one of the bona fida classics of 8bit. In fact, the disappointing 3D version only increased my desire for an intense 32-bit 2D version that much more. Imagine a new *Contra* as ambitious as their *PS Castlevania*. That I would like to see very, very much.

2. **Blonic Commando:** An old fava, I would love to see *BC* and its swinging mechanic updated in 32-bit 2D glory.

3. **Phantasy Star:** This milestone of the SMS and indeed, Sega themselves, sorely need a new sequel.

4. **Gradius:** Konami's classic 2D shooter should not be forgotten. Possibly a 3D update?

5. **Gunner Heroes:** How could anyone not want to see Treasure's brilliant *Gonstar* with insane hand drawn graphics and thousands of colors.

6. **Ninja Gaiden:** A blast from Tecmo's past, this deserves the next generation treatment.

7. **Outrun:** I must see a polygonal Ferrari with my girlfriend being thrown clear.

8. **ThunderBlade:** Make it real time on Model 3. There aren't naizly enough *Blue Thunder* rips these days.

9. **Golgo 13:** This "Professional" style game from back in the day would be amazing with state-of-the-art sound and graphics.

10. **Minar 2049er:** Just for laughs.

Sequels I'm happy about so far:
StarFox, *Castlevania*, *Thunderforce*, *Mario*

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IN DEVELOPMENT

ELECTRONIC ARTS SHOTS HOT FMV FOOTAGE FOR THEIR FORTHCOMING SEQUEL TO THE SUCCESSFUL SOVIET STRIKE ON THE PLAYSTATION. AND GAMEFAN WAS THERE...

NUCLEAR STRIKE

Up at the rare crack of dawn, I trekked on down to Bronze Cave (used in the campy Batman series of the 60's, starring Adam West) to watch the taping of a tiger attack which will be featured in the FMV of EA's Nuclear Strike. Amidst the de rigueur

catering and a potentially dangerous feline, I sat down with Nuclear Strike's producer, Michael Kosaka, and discussed some of the finer points of making the new "Strike" game.

GF: For starters, how long have you been with EA, Michael?

MK: Oh, since about '87. Prior to that I worked as a game designer and art director at Epyx. Before that I was at Atari, as most people in the area were. And before that even, I worked with a group called Penguin Software out of Illinois. But that's going way, way back.

GF: So let's get right to it. What's the backdrop of Nuclear Strike?

MK: Basically, there's a madman with a nuke who wants to do the world in. That's the basic storyline. Uh, we're set in five different locations ranging from Asian jungle to Siberia. We're all over the place.

GF: How many people are working on Nuclear Strike?

MK: The current count is about fifty at this point. It's a fairly good size team.

GF: Has the engine been improved over Soviet Strike, and if so, to what extent?--

MK: Well, we went back and found a lot of places we could improve, which is one of the advantages of having such a good engine to start with and programmers who are well versed in their product. I think you'll be really impressed by the final result as it's been improved a lot. You're gonna see a huge increase in the frame rate and the smoothness of the motion. We also have better AI routines. We went



I sat down with Nuclear Strike's producer, Michael Kosaka, and discussed some of the finer points of making the new "Strike" game.

back and basically polished it up and we were able to build off the base that we had in Soviet Strike. So we're real thrilled with what we came up with. There are some new views and you're gonna be able to play different vehicles as well.

GF: In addition to the chopper?

MK: Well we will have a wide variety of choppers but we also have ground and other air vehicles.

GF: I saw a shot of a Harrier.

MK: Yes, there's a Harrier involved. Um, we've got a few other surprises too. Basically you're gonna be able to play as a lot of different stuff. And the views are, well, you're not gonna ever be in the cockpit, it's

just not that kind of game. But you will be able to change camera angles.

GF: Will NS offer a greater field of view than SS? Some complained that you couldn't see enough of the surrounding terrain and were constantly being bombarded by enemies that were off screen.

MK: You're right. Um, we're going to attack that problem a couple of different ways. One, the view will change slightly depending on what vehicle you're in. Two, we're going to give you a local tactical radar which will be on your HUD. So you'll be able to see dots around you, stuff that's shooting at you from behind and things like that. We're also going to have a new compass indicator which will sort of tell you where you're headed, where the next mission is. So you know, we really listened to what people were coming back with on SS and tried to fix it.

GF: Besides the new vehicles, how does NS differ from SS?

MK: Well there's a greater variety of missions, and hopefully we've got the same mix of strategy and action that we had before, or even better. You know we took some hits for being too hard. Uh, we're looking at that really closely.

GF: How have you addressed the difficulty issue?

MK: Well, we're just looking at ways to make the game not necessarily easier for the

THE FIRST NUCLEAR STRIKE SHOTS FOR THE PLAYSTATION!



EA's venerable "Strike" series continues on with its latest 32bit incarnation, Nuclear Strike. Taking an almost cinematic approach with its storyline in which a lone madman has possession of a nuclear weapon, EA is attempting to appeal to a broader audience with Nuclear Strike. Featuring a greatly enhanced version of the Soviet Strike engine, NS promises a much improved frame rate over the original. With new air and land based vehicles, a more intuitive and simple interface, and easier target management, Nuclear Strike does indeed seem to be headed down the road of mass acceptance.

player, but just more accessible, easier to pick up and play. But we still wanna keep the core players who have stayed with us for the long run.

GF: What have you implemented along those lines?

MK: Well we've put in some clues, a lot more visual and audible cues. Um, like I said, we'll be addressing the HUD so that all of your information will be right there. We've got the interface and we're gonna clean that up a little bit, make it look a little cleaner. We've improved it across the board... You know, it's the same core group that worked on Soviet, so we're building on their expertise. It's the same artists, programmers, and designers... So these are guys who are veterans, so they can just jump on the next one and start adding even more stuff. A lot of the stuff we couldn't fit in SS is going in this one.

GF: Will NS feature the same level of detail in regards to the topography and terrain maps?

MK: Oh, absolutely. And with the same artist, it looks even better. We have other stuff happening in the terrain as well, like we're going to be cratering the ground. We've already got it working and it's hot.



Watch out! Soviet soldier Meets' Kravtsev with the tiger, etc in the course of executing FMV. Some of you may remember Meets from his appearance in Freddie Ford Cossack's Brain Stoker's Dredze.



GF: How many different vehicles total?

MK: The party line right now is five to seven just to be on the safe side. A lot of the stuff we've got in and running. We're tuning it and if it's not fun we're not going to leave it in. We may very well go over that number, but we're not going to put anything in that's not fun.

GF: Outside of a Harrier, what other types of non VTOL aircraft can you feature?

MK: You know that's one of the problems with the engine: fast moving jets are going

to be a problem because you don't have time to react. Stuff is on screen before you can do anything about it. Urban Strike had an F-117, and some people had fun with that. We're still tweaking it and I can't say what types of jets will make it into the final. We're pre-alpha by a long way, so we'll just have to see what works and what doesn't. But the Harrier is cool and will definitely work because it's a VTOL.

GF: How about the music?

MK: The same composers are back. We've got a lot of rich material to draw from as far as the environments and stuff.

GF: Still one player only?

MK: It'll still be one player. We are coming out with a PC version which will be multi-player.

GF: Are there any plans for a Saturn or N64 version?

MK: Not at this time, it's sort of up in the air. For now, it'll be PS and PC only.

GF: Thank you very much for your time. Now get back to work.

MK: Thank you, and I will.

EA's venerable "Strike" series continues forward with Nuclear Strike, the second 32-bit "Strike" game to be released for home consoles.

Answering criticisms leveled by some towards Soviet Strike, NS is designed to be smoother and easier to pick up and play than its predecessor.

Though only about 10 percent complete at this point and further weeks of shooting for the FMV (even traveling to exotic Thailand for some authenticity) remaining, NS should shape up quite well. Keep reading GameFan for the latest on EA's newest "Strike."

IN DEVELOPMENT





A lot of people

have a problem with the
violence in video games.

We, for example, feel it
hasn't been realistic enough.

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WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP RACING

Studio 3DO has emerged (Phoenix-like) from the flames of the burning dodo console and are scorching a new name for themselves with a truly mind-boggling release for the M2. Should the M2 ever actually appear, you'll be pleased to know that there'll be a phenomenal racing game waiting to be released with it. Of course, further proof is needed, so let us delve deeper into the mysterious world of *World Championship Racing*. [Note that all shots are actual shots running on M2 development hardware, and although we weren't allowed to see the system (it was covered in true David Copperfield tradition with a black silk cloth) we saw no evidence of closet-sized super-computer helping out!]

Okay, here's the beef! This is a one player arcade racer featuring a real-time rendered 3D world, employing mip mapping, gouraud shading, alpha channeling and z-buffering capabilities. Cool jargon, eh? This means you'll have almost rendered-intro quality graphics throughout the entire experience. And I write 'experience' because this certainly looks visually more impressive than anything on the market today. Let's get to the most important point: pop-up. There isn't any. Really. None. No, really. After that shock, I viewed the cars during the game; they're between 700 and 900 polygons (less when distant) and look amazing. Not quite as amazing as the showroom cars which weigh in at 2500 polygons and look real. No, really real. These cars form the mammoth MPEG video sequences which the game is packed with (showing cars, cool scenes and astounding fly-bys of the courses), coupled with outstanding red book audio with Doppler effects (crescendos on incoming cars). Take note, cartridge lovers: This is what a four-speed CD system with 8 MB of RAM can accomplish!



The game features analog control, four different perspectives, four pantaloons-ollingly realistic tracks (such as Laguna Seca, Suzuki Raceway, New Orleans and an oval raceway), extra 'Easter eggs' which lead to special fantasy tracks, and those real-time physics which everyone's getting very excited about. What this means to you and me is cool track damage, pixel-accurate shadows, dust thrown up by wheels and tire skids which remain on the track. Just for those craving the ultimate racing battle, there's six different computer AIs which react to your position and actions.

Finally (as I'm rapidly running out of space), there's car damage, a cool Daytona USA-style proximity map, a crazed Pit Radio teammate who coaches you throughout the race (no announcers here!), the obligatory rear-view mirror, auto-brakes (should you need them), and just about every moving part in your car is tweakable. Pure unadulterated racing fun is promised. And by the demo we viewed, we're gagging for a final copy. Watch this space... **CH**



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K-A



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IN DEVELOPMENT

In the quest for marketable product, whether it's a game, movie, or TV show, creative minds often mine the past for ideas and concepts. Like so many other 2D games that have come before, *Pitfall* is about to receive the treatment du jour—a 3D version. Not that there haven't already been updates of *Pitfall*. Does anyone remember the FCI Super *Pitfall* on NES? Maybe not, but I'm sure most will recall *The Mayan Adventure*, which appeared on (of all systems) Jaguar, 32X, Sega CD, SNES, and Genesis. *Pitfall* 3D for PlayStation, however, looks to be the most ambitious yet.

The demo we received had but one playable level, but that was enough to get a rough sense of what Activision is going for. If anything, this game's Harry bears more of a resemblance to Indiana Jones than past incarnations. Can't say that's a bad thing.

Pitfall's new 3D world looks pretty good so far, with a smoothly animated Harry running and swinging through a

solid, real time world. With a former member of AM2 working on the game, that's not too surprising. In addition, a moving camera should facilitate some cinematic moments, all the rage these days.

I didn't see any crocodiles in this version, but these classic enemies must surely make an appearance somewhere. What I did encounter were bottomless pits, scorpions, and big rock monsters. As for the classic Harry swing, rest assured, there's plenty of vine swinging to be done in this game. Only this time, you are allowed to swing into or out of the screen. Hey, they don't call this *Pitfall* 3D for nothing.

As I said, we had a very early version, and there is much work to be done. I didn't see anything dreadfully wrong with what they have already, so let's hope that they can deliver a fun game. That is the point, after all. As always, we'll keep you abreast of this game's progress. S



K1

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EXCLUSIVE HANDS-ON PREVIEW OF THE PLAYSTATION'S
NEXT-GREAT PLATFORMING SUPERSTAR...

GEX

ENTER
THE GECKO

rarely fly. Soaring those
hundreds of feet above the
planet in a glorified poster tube with wings
just doesn't sit well with me. I've got too many
games to play to risk smacking into the Earth's
crust because Bob the pilot had an altercation with
the Mrs. last night. But today I'm making an exception.
The opportunity to play a revolutionary new
3D platform adventure has arisen and the taste of
a new gaming experience is just too enticing to
pass up, especially
when it's from Crystal
Dynamic, a company I
feel especially comfortable with. So fly I will.
I board the riveted tin
cylinder with apprehension, prize of the pilot
seems chipper enough, and away we go.

The moment you walk into Crystal Dynamics
you know you're in a place where they make
video games. There's no parking structure, no
elevator, no stuffy lobby. Beyond the Summer
Lodge-like game room (filled with worn beanbag
chairs and game memorabilia) and past half-a
mountain goat protruding from a hallway wall, I

"Gex is the perfect 3D character! We
give the player a completely unique
gameplay experience."

reach my first destination: a Bean bag chair
Cooperative. I don't
think so, Chip, Steve, Jim, and Gex. But this is
not the Gex I once knew. This one is a scuttling
3D model, and he's impotently staring right at me
as if to say, go on, give it a try.

Picking up the analog joystick, I immediately
realize that walking up at 5.00 and boarding a jet

GEX IS AN ALL-NEW 3D CHARACTER, FEATURING LIZARD SKIN TEXTURING,
+ 3,400 FRAMES OF INCREDIBLE SGI-RENDERED CHARACTER ANIMATION!



Was well worth it. Gex feels amazing, almost real, as Mario did the first time I played SM64, in fact, the feeling is much the same. The Gex model (constructed of over six hundred polygons and wrapped in skin) appears extremely life-like. There's no break-up around the joints (knees, elbows, etc.) and he's colored and shaded astoundingly well... not to mention that he's winking at me. I'm standing in a level that's far from being buttoned up, however: as I

"We believe that we have the best digital and analog controls. We give the player free roaming control over every angle, not just the eight directions."

Don Arey - Lead Designer

take off running, I am amazed... it's huge, the textures are crisp and it's free roaming... Not only are these playgrounds massive, but they are filled with jaw dropping effects, engaging enemies, and genius play mechanics. Before being wrestled away for a sit down with each team member, I've already arrived at the conclusion that Gex 2: Enter the Gecko will be one of the finest 3D games ever produced. Now it's time to go find out why...



HUGE AND UNIQUE BOSSSES, BONUS ROUNDS, AND SECRET HIDDEN AREAS + HILARIOUS MULTIPLE HIT ENEMIES THAT CHALLENGE ALL LEVELS OF GAMERS

Let's start with Gex himself. He is the star of the show after all. One of the few games to feature a celebrity voice that actually adds to the game's appeal, Gex is once again brought to life by comedian Dana Gould. With over 500 one-liners and celebrity impressions, Gex will seem more alive than ever as he parodies pop culture, TV, and Hollywood's finest, in a Ferris Bueller sort of way. What brings this to hand more than ever is that Gex's jaws are an assembly of actual bones wrapped in skin, so he not only says it, he lip syncs it perfectly. Gex has over 125 unique moves/mannerisms, and 3400

frames of 3D-rendered animation. By looking at him, you'd think the PS

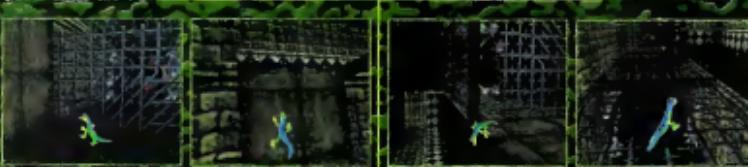


had hardware mip-mapping capabilities. He appears seamless even in the most twisted animations. "Flex Gex" real-time collision technology allows Gex to bend around corners and

meld to his environment with stunning realism. He looks Maevulous.

"We have 'Triple A' animators working furiously to make our characters seem alive and kicking."

Gen Schofield - Director



ALL-NEW GAME ENGINE PROVIDES BEAUTIFULLY TEXTURED POLYGONS AND 360° CHARACTER CONTROL—ALL AT A CONSTANT 30FPS GAME SPEED!

REZ IS BACK AND ONLY GEX CAN STOP HIM! YOU MUST TRAVEL BACK TO THE MEDIA DIMENSION AND SAVE THE WORLD'S TV!!

For Gex, spending his inheritance on a new digital satellite system was the ultimate dream come true. However, looking onto 200 channels of reruns, insect mating rituals (what channel is that on?) and psychic home shopping clubs was not... until Gex would not leave his well-worn barks-lounger, that is, until his universe's TV leaves turned into static. Literally: static.

Suddenly, right out of the movie, these poons in black hats show up from some clandestine federal government agency. It appears that Rez, Gex's arch enemy, has returned, and knocked out the world's TV channels... again! The dudes in the

black hats want Gex to return once again into the Media Dimension... guess they really like TV.

Once deposited into this secret government agency (and rewarded with a cheap tin badge and, of course, a decoder ring), this lab guy, clubbed in tow, shows up with a hot female sidekick by his side. After a series of tests (and probe not included) Gex is put on a high tech treadmill (sorry, Jane, it's motorized). It begins to (frantically) pick up speed: 10 mph... 20 mph... 30 mph... then suddenly just as Gex is about to lose it he sees it! Reaching out of the monitor... Metal, Gold, Sharp, Steel, REZ! Bigger. Badder. Tougher.

Some of the Gex Guys (L to R): Adrian Longland, Lead Programmer; Evan Wells, Senior Game Designer; Eric Elliot, Lead Animator; Mark Miller, Audio/Video Manager; and... Gex!

Sticking with the original premise, as the good geeks do, Gex 2 is set in 8 media theme worlds: Prehistoric, Horror, Circuit Central, Space, Twisted Toons, Secret Agent, Kung-Foo, and of course Rezzopolis... (but you should see Rez now!).

Once you begin to explore these cavernous environments (both open and enclosed), you immediately realize that Gex was made for the 3D genre. Those infamous, section cap feet of his provide many... sparkling moments as you

turn and twist these polygonal worlds while stuck to the side of a precipice. The roundhouse, tail whip is right at home as well.

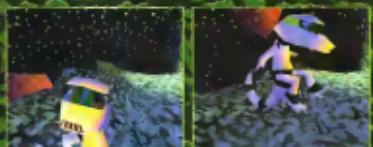
Each level features a three-tiered collectable system. Level specific tibbles are sprinkled cleverly throughout each. Find all 25 of the first tier

"We approach each enemy as a mini-boss with multiple states of interaction, attacks and behaviors."

Don Aray - Lead Designer

and a 2nd will appear. Clear those and a 3rd will appear. These lead to both secrets

locations and one of each level's multiple endings. Even Gex' power-ups have been suitably adapted for your 3D pleasure. For instance, when Gex' firepower is present (which produce mind blowing fx), he fires his Joe by circling them, creating an inner plasma of fire; you can imagine the rest...





The enemies themselves are notoriously thought out as each requires multiple hits to defeat. Chockie, a resident of the horror stage, comes at you (chocking hideously), knife in hand. Whack him once and his head pops off... now you've got TWO problems. Chockie's body stays alive until the head is killed. And so it goes throughout the adventure. Literally every facet of gameplay is getting similar attention. This is a tightly knit team with one goal in mind: an unforgettable, totally unique 3D adventure for your enjoyment. The creative friendly environment of Crystal tends itself to such an end extremely well; in fact it reminds me a lot of our setup, 'cept it's a lot bigger.

An integral part of making all this work, the cameras (which weren't there for my viewing), are going to be quite revolutionary. The way they're planned to operate is beyond those found in the game Gex will inevitably be compared to, SM64. Hey, all I know is that I saw the PS doing stuff the N64 hasn't yet accomplished. How they're doing it, well, let's just say that Crystal's always been about quality, but now they want to win! And with this engine (which took over a year to develop)

they are certainly headed for victory lane. Texture warping/break-up, a fatal flaw exhibited in the majority of 3D PS games, has been banished, the peripheral vision is incredibly vast, and even in the absence of hardware z-buffering, the textures look almost as good when you're right on top of them as they do far away.



"We are using a DXF model from 3D Studio around a skeleton from Alter to create characters."

Glen Schofield - Art Director

WE'VE CREATED A NEW APPROACH TO MAKING GREAT GAMES - IT'S CALLED "SLAVERY"

I seem enthused. Well, it's because I am. Extremely. As one that lives by the platform, cred, games like Enter the Gecko keep me glued to gaming. Last year, Crash, Mario, and Lara thrilled me. I considered '96 a very good year. '97, however, is shaping up to be a banner year for

gaming. Besides most of those mentioned returning, quality 2D gaming has risen again and 3D gaming continues to progress to a level of playability equal to that of 2D as is exhibited herein. As we usher in the third wave of PS software, developers committed to excellence as the ones at Crystal are a valuable commodity. I truly believe that Gex 2: Enter the Gecko will be one of, if not the year's best. We'll of course bring you updates and new information leading up to the release of Gex 2 this Winter. Oh, by the way, the pilot botched the landing during our approach to the dinky Burbank Airport and then circled like he was playing Ace Combat before finally touching down. Video conferencing needs to reach the next level...



IT'S ALL ABOUT MUSIC

So, you know, I'm happy to report I'm getting as much attention as the game. Muu. Muu. Grizz's resident sound guru, tucked away in a huge, dimly lit sound proof room amidst a quiver of medical instrumentation, is crafting an inspired soundtrack that brightens as the game becomes more serious. It's mid, but it sounds rad. We started to get into how he's doing it and I just couldn't assimilate the info in the allotted time. After a couple of minutes we decided he was knowledge about music, let some deal he's got with me. Themes Dolly needs to be made public... will feature an interview with Muu next month, it'll be a great read I can assure you.

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Pandemonium 2

NIKKI AND FARGUS RETURN IN A NEW, WACKY QUEST
FOR THE COMET OF INFINITE POSSIBILITIES!!

Throughout the day as we've traveled back and forth from office to office, cube to cube, we've been passing by the peculiar veiled area where Pandemonium 2 is being produced and I keep wondering: what could possibly be in there? When the time arises, we pass finally pass through the renaissance like curtains. Manned computers line the corral with a huge table (atop a Persian rug) in the center of the fort. Hey, it reminded me of a

BREATHTAKING ENVIRONMENTS ARE EVEN MORE PSYCHEDELIC AND BIZARRE THAN BEFORE!!



fort. Posters, action figures, you name it... stuff's everywhere.

These guys must live here. I think to myself, and again, I flash back to GF where things are much the same. They park me next to Zack Krefling, a Duke Zilla Zappa like character who wastes no time. He immediately starts demoing the game on a development system and again, I am amazed.

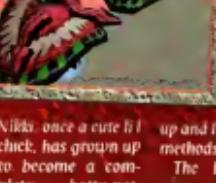
They've essentially taken Pandemonium's most vivid points (heavy camera work and psychedelic landscapes) and injected them with burning ferocity. The textures are insane, not only in detail, but in shape and color. The gameplay can only be described as frenetic. Vertical, horizontal, down, up, in, and around. Pandemonium 2 is an exercise in extreme motion. Zack quickly explains... The designer behind the first game was apprehensive. He thought we may induce vom-



GIGANTIC BOSSSES THAT STRETCH THE IMAGINATION! THIS DRAGON WILL ASTOUND YOU!!



ius erectus (well, he didn't say that exactly) but now he's gone, and so we're ricing things up a bit." Uh, yeah. I'd say that sums it up.



She's, uh, developed! And she has the outfit to prove it. After Pandemonium 2's opening CG is out, Nikki will probably have her own web-page. As for Fargus, well, his happy-go-lucky, pseudo-dorkish demeanor has been washed away. The new Fargus is diabolical, troubled... mad. He now beats enemies with Sid who's become a living boomerang and looks like a cross between an Elvis impersonator, Liberace, and the Joker.

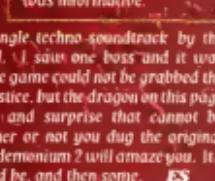
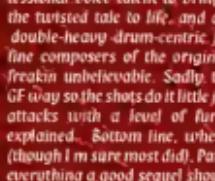
Changes in the play mechanics have taken place as well. Nikki and Fargus can now swim, fly, climb, and grapple. And in this environment, trust me, these play mechanics take on a whole new meaning. The method of attack in P2 has also undergone changes. If pumping up enemies until they explode isn't cool enough, grab a power-

Nikki, once a cute lil chick, has grown up to become a complete hotty-pot.

up and fry them to a crisp. Many such fine methods of disposal are available.

The levels themselves are longer and even more (way more) surrealistic compared to the original, and because they display more geometry there's also more stuff in em. The enemy AI is juiced up respectively, leading to more variety in movement and behavior (but don't worry they still go Duh.). A total of 21 levels will make the final cut including castles, alien landscapes, and even Fargus' brain!

Keeping in-line with the original's stunning CG and voice over, P2 will feature professional voice talent to bring the twisted tale to life, and a double-heavy drum-centric jungle techno soundtrack by the fine composers of the original. I saw one boss and it was freakin' unbelievable. Sadly, the game could not be grabbed the GF way so the shots do it little justice, but the dragon on this page attacks with a level of fury and surprise that cannot be explained. Bottom line, whether or not you dug the original (though I'm sure most did), Pandemonium 2 will amaze you. It's everything a good sequel should be, and then some. **ES**



NEW GAME ENGINE ALLOWS FOR MUCH LARGER LEVELS!

IN-DEPTH GAMEPLAY AT A FRANTIC PACE!



Team Pandemonium



Thanks to everyone at Crystal for making our visit as entertaining as it was informative.

3D GAMING'S
NEWEST
CRITTER MAKES
HIS PS DEBUT
THIS FALL.
THIS ONE'S
GONNA BE
GREAT!



Croc

LEGEND OF THE GEMBOS

Ridley, the tidal wave of 3D adventure/platform popularity, created by mega hits like Mario 64 and Tomb Raider, Croc, Fox's new character-driven 3D jewel, is among the best of a new crop headed our way... a resurgence is at hand.

The moment you lay eyes on this visual feast of a platformer you'll know, no matter what it plays like, you're gonna make it a point to see every square inch of it. It's just that striking.

Fortunately, Argonaut has focused as much on gameplay as they have graphics.

They've packed Croc with cavernous arenas, towering bosses, clever level design, and enough platform action to appease even the most demanding addict, and it's all surrounded by some of the most lush visuals ever seen in a free-form adventure.

Transparencies, translucencies, real time lighting, crisp texture mapping, gouraud shading, and peripheral vision that stretches far and wide all come together, creating an aura of vastness seldom seen in the realm of 3D gaming.

A cute little reptile with personality to burn and a Japanese persona, Croc attacks in two ways, with the patented head thump, and by performing his "tail kick"



P REVIEW



DEVELOPER - ARGONAUT

PUBLISHER - FOX

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INT. TO ADV.

FAIR VALUE - \$60.00



E. STORM
See what happens
when they don't send
art!



Travel through 4
Islands... Desert, Ice,
Forest, and the Castle
Island of Baron Dante!





ala Gex. Each is accompanied by Croc's animated personality, Ka-pow!, Ka-smash! he squeals (in Urkel-ese) as he pulverizes Baron Dante's evil underlings.

Like Soak, Croc spends most of his time freeing captive critters and collecting crystals which, if he's hit, scatter. Collect 50 crystals and earn a bonus. Finish every level with every crystal and get an even bigger bonus. There are over 40 levels in all with a whopping 200 individual game arenas. Hard to fathom, given the amazing visuals in each.

Having played a 75% completed version of

Waddle, jump, swim, swing, climb and smash the opposition with Croc's tail kick!



Croc (for an hour or so until they wrestled it away), I can tell you first hand that this is a 3D platformer to be reckoned with. While it does borrow from the best in the category, it's got a look and feel all its own, not to mention some of the most creative level design I've seen in some time.

How much Croc resembles a Japanese-bred platformer must be commended as well. If I hadn't been briefed, I'd have sworn I was playing an import. The music is distinctly Japanese sounding mix and Croc himself is bursting with Japanese overtones.

Argohaus is crafting what is sure to become an international success and one of this year's most memorable platform experiences. A further testament to the PS's polygon processing power (when it's in capable hands) is at hand.



Rescue the peace loving Gobbo Islanders from the evil clutches of Baron Dante!





NAMCO PRESENTS YET ANOTHER HARDCORE PRODUCTION

ACE COMBAT 2

FULL-ON FLIGHT SIMULATION...

TAKE TO THE SKIES IN OVER TWENTY BURNING TOP GUN ASSIGNMENTS!



Anyone remembering back to the second wave of classic PlayStation software should look back on Ace Combat with fond affection. "It was the time when the world was still salivating on the likes of Ridge Racer and Tekken, and then Namco delivered a cool arcade flight sim. Sure, there was some major pop-up going on, a plum-throated Brit narrator obviously trained by the SNK school of announcers and a frightful two-player mode, but Ace Combat sure played a-mean-one-player dogfight. And now, over two years later, comes the much-anticipated sequel, headed for American shores this August. Chief Hambleton launched into a Highway to the Danger Zone and tries to wipe a begey from his six. Let's see if he was successful...

The entire Ace Combat 2 experience simply oozes quality. From our complete Japanese version of the game, I experienced a frighteningly realistic rendered intro (of exceptional quality like the original) before my green wireframe Ace Combat 2 logo slammed into view. Then to try my options first, where I find everything from screen size adjustments to control options. Flicking my joypad to the expert setting (exactly the size button configuration as

the first but with L2 and R2 for left and right yaw), I began my initial training assignment.

Instead of a fruity and stilted announcer bugging the hell out of me (as in the first Ace Combat), I was treated to a real-time pan around of the rebel base center of operations while a gruff no-nonsense commander railed off my mission objectives. "Roger that!" The grizzled tough-talker explained the situation as military 'mood' music drummed away in the background, and I watched the stunning wire-frame of the mission area rotating about fluidly in front of me. Every piece of mission data was immediately available at my fingertips. Flicking my helmet visor down, I headed for the hangar. Clambering into my trusty F/A, I cleared the hanger bay (where fully rotating real-time planes can be viewed) and took to the skies.

And that's where I've been ever since. This classic arcade dogfighting flight simulation has me hooked in exactly the same way as the first. However, there's a whole bundle of improvements you can look forward to this time around. There's the crackling comments coming in from your co-pilots and wingmen, smooth and constant 30 fps action, amazing in-flight movement and double the number of missions to fly (apparently over 30). The very fact that the action doesn't ever (and I mean EVER) slow down is obviously due to the supreme 3D graphics engine Namco





developers have honed over the intervening years, this has now reached almost perfection with a re-draw rate rivaling that of *Pilotwings* 64 (however, some hills still look very polygonal and there's some pixelly ground textures). You simply don't need to see further than the re-draw rate, and those grumblings about the ground textures moving slower than they're supposed to when you're skimming the turf are in for a shock: everything moves at a rocketing and utterly believable speed!

increased cash (enabling the purchase of more expensive and even cooler planes). Some of these enemy targets are actual flying aces with suitably unfortunate names ("Maverick", "Goose", "Ice Gunner", "Pantaloons King", "Ernest"... that sort of caper) bag one and you'll receive a special medal (and sometimes a new plane). Kill all these flying aces to complete your trophy collection and... well, you'll have to wait and see, won't you?

What we can tell you is the grading system (you'll be

USE SKILLS TO WIN THE WAR!

EXPERT AERIAL COMBAT TACTICS MUST BE EMPLOYED TO PREVENT A REBEL VICTORY!

This graphics engine was what instantly impressed the GameFan posse (look at the screen-shots for evidence of the depth of vision, huge skyscrapers on many stages, the ability to fly up through the cloud line to dogfight at insane heights and planes hurtling out of control when they're hit), but *Ace Combat 2* looks to be a lot more complete experience than that. Sure, there's no two-player option this time around (perhaps a wise move after the tragic 'dogfight in a texture-mapped square' of the first game), but the one-player challenge mode that makes up for that. Now the sorties you'll be launching are a lot more interesting and complex, involving the finest wingmen (code-named 'Slash' or 'Edge'—obviously AC2 developers are rock guitarist fans) who actually take care of business and have more available commands and are therefore of greater use. Also, there's increased artificial intelligence for the enemy pilots. Of course, some of the enemy A-Wacs and B2 planes are sitting ducks (circle behind these fools and pound away with machine gun fire), but try overstretching your piloting skills and you'll soon be facing whole squadrons of MiGs or F-22s flying insanely acrobatic loops and weaving maneuvers with one target in mind... your sorry rear!

Also present on all of the levels are many optional targets for destruction; these give you

promoted after every sortie gives you numerous cool-looking badges and new-found respect among your flying buddies. But, complete some levels in record time or by killing every single target out there, and you'll be granted a super secret mission... As you can tell, there's a whole load more flying action on offer this time around.

So, you've got convincing environments, planes with raiders that actually move when you're turning, an abundance of 'airborne combat' times (ranging from the ultra cheese-ridden Kenny Loggins rock tragedies to some pretty cool Drum and Bass (er, and even Latino guitar) experiences), simply tons of missions and secrets, some ultra-secret 'military' aircraft to investigate (time to get Fox Mulder on the phone), and a compatibility with analog and flight-stick (joysticks): just what, exactly, could go wrong? This looks to be the most insane dogfighting experience you'll ever play! Find out if I'm dead-on (or completely off target) in the next issue. CH



P REVIEW



PlayStation

VERSION: N/A

GENRE: AERO

SYSTEM: PS

1-2 PLAYERS: ONE

DEVELOPER: CIBERHORN

PUBLISHER: N/A



CHIEF HAMBLETON
AC2 style... in effect!!!
Hance's airborne action ROCK!!

SUPERB PRESENTATION THROUGHOUT!





YET ANOTHER STYLISH ARCADE CONVERSION FROM NAMCO!

INCREDIBLE NEW FEATURES AND STORY MODE A WHOLE NEW DEADLY MISSION!

The President's daughter has been kidnapped by an infamous criminal mastermind called Serudo Goro and his army of devoted (read psychotic) henchmen, headed up by the scheming Wild Dog. The ransom for her safe return is the right to the throne of a small third world country, and should the government refuse to comply within 24 hours, Goro will send Rachel back to the President.... (dramatic pause) piece by piece! Gasp! You play the part of Richard Miller, a special agent assigned to rescue Rachel from Goro's evil clutches, and put a stop to his dastardly plans before anarchy ensues. Use of deadly force has been authorized.

Although at first glance Time Crisis appears to be yet another Virtua Cop rip off, dig a bit deeper and you'll soon discover that nothing could be further from the truth. Yes, Time Crisis is a polygonal, on-rails 'gun' game, but Namco has added enough unique features to distance their effort from AM2's homicidal classic.

TIME CRISIS



EXCITING SCENES FROM ARCADE MODE

Probably the most innovative feature of Time Crisis is the ability to duck behind cover. In the arcade this is achieved with a special pedal, but in the PS version you have the option to use either a button on the side of the Guncon, or (Namco doesn't recommend this) plug a d-pad into the second port and step on it! Ducking serves to both reload your gun (a non-upgradable six-shot special) and protect you from enemy fire. A strict time limit ensures that you can't just duck forever (hence 'Time Crisis), and you must also duck to avoid environmental hazards such as swinging hooks and rolling crates. Ducking adds a much needed element of strategy to the usual blast-



RICHARD MILLER
SPECIAL AGENT





ing formula, and really gives *Time Crisis* a different flavor than *VCop*.

The second major innovation of *Time Crisis* is the importance of time.

Although you do take damage in *Time Crisis* and can be shot to death (indeed when you first play through the game that's your main concern) as you get better time becomes the primary consideration. Time is more important than accuracy, and getting the best possible score involves finding the quickest possible way to clear an area.

The PS conversion is shaping up just fine, with Sony's 3D powerhouse doing a decent job of replicating the System 22's amazing visuals. The version I played was pretty much complete (only the translation was left) and looked great. But best of all, in keeping with Namco's tradition of beefing up their coin-op conversions, they've included an all new "Original" story mode exclusive to



the PS version. It's not just an extra level, it's a whole new mission with five different levels, multiple routes and multiple endings! We'll be back next month with a full review and more info. Stay tuned... K

GUNCON—THE NEW NAMCO PERIPHERAL

Packed with *Time Crisis* is Namco's very own light gun, the Guncon. The Guncon connects to the video output of your PlayStation and actually stores the screen image in the gun for accuracy up to one pixel!! It may not recoil like the arcade gun, but it's the most accurate home light gun ever made. Unfortunately, the Guncon only works with Namco compatible games, the next one being *Point Blank*.



RACHEL MACPHERSON
PRESIDENT'S DAUGHTER



P
PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - NAMCO

PUBLISHER - NAMCO

FORMAT - CD

1 OF PLAYERS - 1 PLAYER

DIFFICULTY - TRICKY

AVAILABLE - AUGUST



KNIGHTMARE

Even without recoil, it's still a kick! BUCK!



R REVIEW



DEVELOPER - CORE

PUBLISHER - EHDOS

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - ONE

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - HOPEFULLY NOW



E. STORM

Adventurous little devils, aren't they?!

SwagMania



After over two years in development, Core's first ever top-down action adventure is upon us. Developed in the vein of Nintendo's mega-huge *Zelda* franchise, *Swagman* not only covers similar territory, but does so in impressive fashion with added play elements and an emphasis on art and character design.

As the CG intro unfolds, all Swag breaks loose as somehow the pages of the creepy book Zack and Hanna are reading before bed suddenly cause strange occurrences. They somehow open the door to an alternate reality (the one that invades your sleep) and Swagman is the resident evil force. Dreamflight, a band of shapely fairies attempt to warn Zack and Hanna but are quickly captured by the Swagster and locked away in Limbo. Hanna is locked away as well, caged by Swagman's evil invaders (a horde of Gremlin-like demons—playful, but deadly). Zack takes cover behind a stuffed bear and avoids the attack. Now, alone at first, Zack must negotiate the now possessed household and free the Dreamflight one by one, and ultimately face Swagman himself. In order to gain access to the imprisoned Dreamflight, Zack must collect bugs that are strewn throughout the game as directed by the Scaria, the king of Zack's bug collection (broken open by a



LIMBO RESCUE THE CAPTIVE DREAMFLIGHT!





dimsey henchman). Collected bugs are unleashed to form a path to each of the Swagman's prisoners.

After unlocking the first two tutorial puzzles, Zack is joined by Hanna, and cooperative gameplay ensues. This is when Swagman begins to take shape. The first hour or so is spent swatting demons with Zack's flashlight, bombing your way into hidden areas and getting accustomed to the game's many nuances (chests, weapon usage etc.). Once Hanna is freed however (after defeating Master Pumpkin) one of the other siblings activates switches (and the like) while the suitable player takes care of business. For instance, Zack cannot reach Gloom once he's set in the middle of his lair, while Hanna's Yo-Yo can.

So while Zack holds open the way to the wimp, Hanna goes in for the kill. In the nightmare worlds where



THE BONEYARD... NO PLACE FOR CHILDREN!



double jumping must be performed Hanna once again must be called upon. While Zack's dream monster has stronger attacks, Hanna's has better jumping capabilities. And so it goes as youaverse, Clark dungeons, gardens, bone yards, and other such creepy locales. Each level is quite large (many areas linked together), and once the boss is downed in each, you won't be disappointed. Linked to the game's mainline, joined by mirrors are nightmare areas which Zack and Hanna must use to access parallel worlds. Here the duo takes the form of hideous creatures of their own design. Zack emits a breath of fire in this darkest of modes and has a wicked headbutt, while Hanna does laser vision and double jumping. Weaving through these action-oriented levels adds further to the game's overall appeal.

Swagman's rendered graphics (sprinkled with polygonal objects) are rich in design and detail as are the effects such as light sourcing, transparencies and just about everything else in the PS3's war chest. The music too, is first rate and fits the drama of the situation perfectly. Haunting melodies accompanied by somber choruses make up most of the soundtrack.

It all adds up to yet another game in which a classic genre has received a solid 3D overhaul. While breakthrough 3D adventures will always be a welcome commodity, so will the old school games dressed up in shiny new guise. If you agree, I highly recommend Core's latest. **ES**



Mommy said monsters aren't real...Well kiddies, looks like mommy lied!



ONE Man. ONE solution. ONE state of mind.
John Cain is the ULTIMATE soldier of the future!

One

ASC has done a few good games in the past, but nothing that really distinguishes them as a major league player. Let's face it; Capcom and Namco are hardly quaking in their boots. Which is what makes *One* all the more shocking. Developed by Visual Concepts, *One* is a 3D action/adventure (emphasis on action) that has the potential to become something truly special. Admittedly, the game is currently at a very early stage of development (the beta we played was only 15% complete), but the framework is in place for an epic action experience the likes of which has never been seen before.

One is set 40 years in the future,



with the player taking control of John Cain, an ordinary man transformed into a lethal killing machine by a top secret bio-genetics experiment. Cain has had his left arm replaced with a state of the art multi-purpose assault weapon, and now thrives on one emotion—rage. The story hasn't been finalized, but apparently Cain escapes the experiment and returns to his apartment, which is where the game starts. The parties responsible for the experiment want Cain back, and they send a force to his apartment to get him. Cain escapes to the rooftop and the action begins...

The first time I saw *One* in motion it reminded me of *Pandemonium*. The 3D graphics, the large environments, the set paths, the sweeping camera movements all bear more than a passing resemblance to Crystal Dynamics' 2.5D classic. But the moment you start to play the game you realize the differences.

First, *One* features true 3D control. This changes

secret bio-genetics experiment. Cain has had his left arm replaced with a state of the art multi-purpose assault weapon, and now thrives on one emotion—rage. The story hasn't been finalized, but apparently Cain escapes the experiment and returns to his apartment, which is where the game starts. The parties responsible for the experiment want Cain back, and they send a force to his apartment to get him. Cain escapes to the rooftop and the action begins...



P
PREVIEW



DEVELOPER - VISUAL CONCEPTS

PUBLISHER - ASC GAMES

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

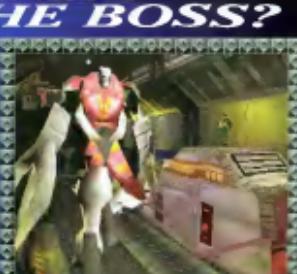
DIFFICULTY - N/A

AVAILABLE - NOVEMBER



KNIGHTMARE
This one's
going to be big!

WHO'S THE BOSS?



the gameplay dramatically, and allows for a much stronger emphasis on both shooting and exploration. The levels can (and do) branch in all directions, while the freedom of movement gives the combat an almost overhead shooter feel. Cain must use a variety of weapon power-ups (plasma cannons, missile launchers, flame throwers, etc.) to battle enemy forces, while at the same time negotiating tricky platform sections. The control is pretty tight, and Cain can run, roll, strafe, hang and climb with ease.



metropolis stage which takes place on rooftops high above the city streets. The camera flows through *Pandemonium*-style set positions to add cinematic appeal to the action, although ASC is planning on making the camera controllable in the final version.

Even at this early stage of development, *One* is looking hot. There's still a lot to do before the game's fall release, but if Visual Concepts can make good on everything they've promised, ASC should have a world class hit on their hands. Keep it here. **K**

Second, the levels in *One* are HUGE with NO LOADING! All the data is streamed on the fly, *Crash Bandicoot* style, resulting in hours of seamless gameplay. Currently there are five stages under development, including a mountain stage with crumbling walkways and high tension wires, an underground monorail stage complete with an extensive train ride, and a



CHOOSE THE CORE THEN EQUIP THE PARTS TO MAKE YOUR MECHANIZED WARRIOR!
FIGHT THE CROME ORGANIZATION! TAKE YOUR ARMORED CORE TO WAR!

ARMORED CORE



MAD, MANIC MECH ACTION! ARMORED CORE IS HARDCORE!

A half a century ago, a war broke out in which humans lost all of their land. In this time of upheaval, the ancient bureaucracy of the world's governments crumbled as their administrative abilities failed one by one. With the prospect of losing their land staring them in the face, global conglomerates organized a federation of corporations, and in a last-ditch effort, planned to construct an underground city. The construction of the newly-christened Isaac City (does Ted Lange



live there?) was proceeding smoothly when all of a sudden, the just formed federation was dissolved under the fair competition policy. Crome, the dominant corporation of the construction, was now in the position of managing this urban project. They began flexing their significant corporate muscle and seized control of the operation. Other corporations began to criticize and despise Crome. In earnest, rival companies began equipping an army and started fighting for rights within Isaac City. In Armored Core, you play as a member of Raven's Nest, a secret police force set up to carry out illegal, though sometimes legal, missions in defense of Crome's interests.

As the game begins, you are required to complete a basic mission to earn some starting credits. Using these funds,



STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO CORE ASSEMBLY



BUY AND SELL PARTS FOR YOUR CORE

1

This is where it all starts. Build your Armored Core from scratch with a measly 100,000 credits. At this stage stick to the basic parts with a cheap and light machine gun. You won't be able to start a mission until you have a complete Core which meets the energy and weight requirements.

2

With the parts in tow, you need to enter the garage to assemble them. Equip each component and keep an eye on the numbers in the bottom right corner. These show the weight and energy limitations of your Armored Core. Choose carefully so that arms, legs and weapons don't go over the limit.



Core News Network

After a hard day's work, Colonel Max just McMax was so riled with a host of competitive Core Troopers with his cameras. Photo courtesy of East Side Productions.

you build your own mech from scratch. From here, you are allowed to tackle missions in the hopes of earning enough credits to build a mech that is powerful enough to survive the more difficult levels. Consistent upgrading of your mech is absolutely necessary for the success of Raven's Nest. And when the number of missions (either successfully completed or not) reaches a certain point, the final mission becomes playable.

The number of ways that your mech can be configured (supposedly over one million) truly adds a level of creativity to Armored Core's gameplay. From replacing bipedal legs with tank-like treads to substituting arms with missile launchers, the mech's appearance can vary wildly—they aren't all humanoid in form. Doing one step further, the color of the mech's individual components can be colored with RGB precision. You can also select



screen is matted with two roughly square windows preserving the 4:3 aspect ratio of a television. This makes the individual windows rather small but properly proportioned and with a very playable frame rate. However, for the true battle experience, two PS's can be linked up for full screen, two monitor play. Unfortunately, there aren't that many of us out there with the resources to experience this, perfect form of two player play, but it's a welcome feature.

There's still a fair amount of work to be done on Armored Core before it's complete. A number

of missions have yet to be finalized, but it's more than likely that the two player battle-mode and the customizable mechs will be the biggest draw of this game. With its solid graphics and already polished feel, it has attracted the attention of Sony of America who plan to release it statewide. I'd say that's a pretty safe bet. AC should provide all the mech thrills any sane human could handle.



P PREVIEW



DEVELOPER - FROM SOFTWARE

PUBLISHER - SONY

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

AVAILABLE - SEPTEMBER '97



SUBSTANCE D
Armored Core in development is hard core.

GARAGE

GLASS SUIT
FLAME STRIPE
STRIKED FRAME
DARKED BODY
METAL PAINT
CROSS SHAPES



GARAGE

FLAME SUIT
STRIKED FRAME
DARKED BODY
METAL PAINT
CROSS SHAPES



GARAGE

FLAME SUIT
STRIKED FRAME
DARKED BODY
METAL PAINT
CROSS SHAPES

GARAGE



SELECT A COLOR SCHEME TO MATCH YOUR TERRAIN

3

Once assembled, the Core can receive a custom paint job. Choose from a variety of styles which can be further edited to suit your own personal taste or more strictly to match the terrain of your next mission. Forest, Jungle, arctic and night patterns are just a few on offer.

CUSTOMIZE COLORS AND DESIGN AN INSIGNIA

4

When you have decided on the colors, complete your masterpiece with a customizing option that lets you color your mech's shoulder. Choose from the simple library or start your own with a blank color palette complete with brush styles, shape files and other painting tools.



PLAYSTATION NATION UPDATE!
NEW CRASH 2 SCREENS!

Coverage has sprung to life rather early regarding the sequel to my favorite platformer of '96, *Crash Bandicoot*. As I'm writing this I've not played or even seen *Crash 2* in motion (it isn't due out for another 3 months or so) but the kind folks at Sony were nice enough to throw me a bone or two.

Among Crash's new bag of tricks are a rocket, which he motors down huge twisting corridors, and the ability to traverse over head grates.

As for the levels, they are apparently wider and more cavernous than the

previous ones, and now feature multiple paths. The most interesting new feature to come to light thus far, though, has got to be the serpentine effect in which Crash goes from 2D to 3D within the same level, as exhibited in the rainy shot above. The mixing of play mechanics in these levels will be refreshing to say the least. Visually, well, for the second year in a row, you'll be hard pressed to find anything which exhibits this much visual prowess.

As pure platformers go I still consider the original a flawless game (by '96 standards of course) and I expect *Crash 2* to leave a similar impression. The competition will be much more prevalent this year, however, so the design team's got their work cut out for them. We're told 8 levels will be playable at the by-now-past E3 so look for more comprehensive coverage in the August E3 spectacular. **ES**



In light of seeing the movie, I can now report that *The Lost World* game actually follows the story of *The Lost World* movie (what little there was) pretty closely. The action takes place on the island where InGen originally created the dinosaurs before shipping them to Jurassic Park, and revolves around InGen's attempt to take dinosaurs off the island—"The worst idea in the history of bad ideas," as Jeff Goldblum puts it. Obviously the game takes a few creative liberties (you get to see the story from the dinosaurs' point of view), but for the most part you'll be surprised at how accurate it is, right down to the final chapter's taking place in San Diego.

The movies are famous for their award winning CG, and DreamWorks have done an equally impressive job of bringing the dinosaurs to life on the PS. Their technique of wrapping textures around complete polygon models (as opposed to applying separate textures to each polygon) gives the creature's skin a

hyper realistic look, especially when they move—their skin actually stretches! The models of the dinosaurs themselves are also excellent, and animate well (at a constant 30fps) that from a distance they look like 2D sprites.

This beta is one of many we've



received from DreamWorks, and shows the game in a near finished state. Nearly all the levels are functioning, more enemies have been added and the FMV is in place (not taken from the movie, unfortunately). Like the original *Jurassic Park* on Genesis you get to control different creatures as the game progresses (Compy, Raptor, Hunter, Sarah Harding and the almighty T-Rex) and each has its own specific abilities. We'll review *Lost World* next month. K



P
PREVIEW



DEVELOPER - DREAMWORKS

PUBLISHER - EA/DREAMWORKS

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - AUGUST '97



KNIGHTMARE
"It's over, that's how it starts. Then there's running, and screaming..."



FORSAKEN

BLAST THE FREE-LOADING SCUM!!!!

Given the success of *Descent* (and its superior sequel, *Descent 2*) it's surprising that we haven't seen more *Descent* clones in the past few years, especially in the console market. PS *Descent* was but a shadow of its former PC self, and *Descent Maximum* wasn't much better. The fact is, the market is ripe for a decent 360-degree corner shooter right now, and Acclaim may have just the answer...

After an uncontrollable fusion reaction devastates the planet surface, Earth becomes a lifeless husk, devoid of atmosphere and bathed in searing radiation from the sun. The dead system is classified as condemned, meaning that every free-loading scum in the galaxy has the right to raid the planet and take anything of value. In *Forsaken* you play the part of one of these scavengers, a ruthless mercenary who pilots an anti-grav ponycycle into the now-abandoned Earth settlements in search of fame and fortune. Mostly fortune.

Acclaim informed me that the Forsmen beta they were touring with was extremely early, but they could have fooled me! Already the game runs at a near-constant 60 fps (yes, 60 fps!) with detailed polygon environments and some truly breathtaking lighting effects. Although there were only a few enemies present, most of the weapons were working (spectacularly), and Probe claims that they can keep this level of speed and fluidity even once all the enemies and AI are in place.

At present, the control is set

up nearly identically to *Descent* (definitely the best format for this type of game) but—thank the lord—the option to totally remap all the controls is already in! In fact, if anything, the anti-grav cycles are even more maneuverable than the craft in *Descent*, boding very well for some fast-paced 360-degree combat in the final version.

Probe plans to include at least 15 different single player levels in *Forsaken*, split over five different zones. There will be 15 different cyber-bikes to ride and 15 characters to choose from, each with their own voice and personality. But perhaps best of all, *Forsaken* will include a split-screen (vertical or horizontal) two player mode, with eight custom designed multi-player levels. *Forsaken* has the words 'potential' and 'hit' stamped all over it. I'll drop some more knowledge the moment I get it. —K



P
PREVIEW


PlayStation

DEVELOPED - PROBE

PUBLISHER - ACCLAIM

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - FEB '98



KNIGHTMARE
Descent at 60fps?



CAPCOM'S D&D COLLECTION

Fans of the awesome Capcom coin-ops (and we know you're out there!) should be drooling! The first game in the Saturn *D&D Collection*, *Tower of Doom*, is coming along beautifully—obviously at home on the 2D king. Both *Tower of Doom* (seen here) and its sequel *Shadow Over Mystaria* will be on the *D&D Collection* disc, scheduled to appear on the Saturn this fall. *Shadow Over Mystaria* has been extremely camera shy, but we have plenty of *Tower of Doom* to show in

this exclusive E3 preview.

How accurate is *Tower of Doom* translating to the Saturn? Well, as *Alpha 2* and *Cyberbots* proved, the Saturn just eats up CPS 2 conversions. Whether it's the Saturn's inherent abilities, its additional RAM, or the cartridge RAM upgrade, 2D titles just beg to be on the Saturn. All



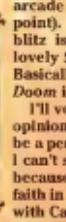
Dungeons & Dragons TOWER OF DOOM



The CPS 2 translations thus far have been fighting games, however, while *TOD* is a side-scrolling hack'n slash beat-'em-up, a new Capcom treat for Saturn owners. We now have many characters filling the screen, large scrolling environments, and classic Capcom sprite madness. Thankfully the Saturn seems to handle such tasks effortlessly, as the graphic quality of *Towers of Doom* almost perfectly replicates its arcade counterpart, with no slow down and very few missing frames.

The only reason *D&D* is a "preview" at this point is because *Shadow of Mystaria* isn't ready. Otherwise, *Tower of Doom* seems to be almost 100% completed. Remember the Troll that must be burned to be destroyed? The multi-tentacled Hellbounds? Or how about the swamp outside of town, where the Cleric uses Turn Undead to destroy swarms of zombies, and a giant Black Dragon boils your skin with hot acid? It's all here, down to the pixel. And while the loading is frequent (at least once per area), it's acceptably short. The music is PCM, straight from the arcade (no remixed arrange tuneage, thankfully) and the sound effects are arcade true (although still Japanese at this point). Rounding out the accurate conversion blitz is perfect control, made joyous by that lovely Saturn pad, and a hot two-player mode. Basically, let it be known that *D&D Towers of Doom* is perfectly intact on the Saturn.

I'll voluntarily jump the gun and form a solid opinion on this one: *D&D Towers of Doom* will be a perfect, awesome conversion on the Saturn. I can't say the same for *Shadow Over Mystaria*, because I haven't played it, but *TOD* puts a lot of faith in my heart. Fans should be very, very pleased with Capcom's *D&D Collection*. **G**



OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - FALL '97



GLITCH
Yeah, yeah... I
played D&D in high
school... So?

P
PREVIEW



DEVELOPER - CAPCOM

PUBLISHER - CAPCOM

FORMAT - CD



P REVIEW



PlayStation

DEVELOPER - EUTECHNIK

PUBLISHER - ACTIVISION

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - N/A

AVAILABLE - SEPTEMBER



SUBSTANCE D

Yet another PS racing game...

When all is said and done, will the PlayStation be remembered as a racer's system? Who knows, but there's a fair number of racing games on the PS (a lot of them quite good) and the struggle for a gamer's coveted attention (and dough) is survival of the fittest. Actually, maybe that's not true now that I think of it. Look at the success of *Need for Speed II*. Alright, so I've just discredited my own point. Regardless, a racing game needs to be pretty decent to succeed, at least critically, and Activision's *Grand Tour Racing '98* looks like it might be well on its way to being just that: pretty decent.

GTR'98 sends you on a globe trot as you race through exotic locales all around the world. Egypt, Easter Island, Moscow, Switzerland, Scotland, and Hong Kong serve as backdrop for your racing pleasure. Even better, each course has at least six alternate routes that can be selected at the start of each race. Not only does this alter the actual path you take around each track, but it can also change the weather conditions, time of day, or even the class of car that you drive. Let's just take the Hong Kong track for example. Select route 1 and you race a sports car through sunny conditions. Select route 4 and you race an Indy car through the sunset. Pretty cool, wouldn't you say?

GTR'98, even in its alpha state, is a fine looking racing game. The courses approach zero pop up meaning you can see really far. In exchange for the expansive view, the frame rate chugs along a bit making the game play a little slowly at this stage, but I'd bet a few dollars that it'll be sped up. Or it better be, let's put it that way. Because as it stands, the slower speed makes traversing the track (especially with a NeGcon) a little too easy. Fun, but somewhat easy. I'll trust them to rectify. Strangely enough, the two player split screen mode seems faster than one player. Hmmm.

The alpha we received was devoid of any music and the sound effects have yet to be finalized. As is, the cars sound like buzzy grats. I trust some meaty samples will be in place by the time the game ships. And as I understand it, techno will probably be the block rockin' beat of choice, and I'd say that's a pretty safe bet. Nothing like driving to some pumping tunes, eh?

With a planned September release, *GTR'98* is now in the tricky process of final tweaking, where, as in the editing of a film, a perfect synergy must form between all the disparate pieces. I think they'll be able to pull it off. Please look for a final review in the near future. SD





HOT LAST MINUTE ADDITION: 2 PLAYER SPLIT-SCREEN ACTION, NO SLOW DOWN, 24 FPS!

-MACHINE- HUNTER



I've been consistently impressed by Eurocom's progress with *Machine Hunter*; every new version we receive is a marked improvement over the previous. And now, with this last update before the final, *Machine Hunter* has been cured of all its ailments.

Remember my big complaint in past previews? Right, no two-player option. Well, I made it very clear to MGM that I'd be scoring *Machine Hunter* lower if it didn't offer a two-player mode. They said something like: "Uh, we didn't plan on it, and it's probably too late...but we'll try." Not too assuring. But like *Parappa* says, you gotta believe. And sure enough, in this latest rev, Eurocom squeezed in a fantastic two-player mode, split-screen no less, with zero sacrifices to the excellent 3D engine. Amazing. A simple commodity, and now *Machine Hunter* is a real contender. Other additions, or should I say refinements, include buttoned-up levels, finalized sound, a few more seconds of FMV, and additional enemies (check out the all-new tanks, cannons, and huge bosses in our shots).

Machine Hunter is turning out to be a very cool game. The two-player mode is great (thumbs up to MGM for listening), and the 3D engine and techno tunes are top-quality. We will absolutely, positively review *Machine Hunter* next month, so check back with me before you whip out your wallet. **G**



P
REVIEW



DEVELOPER - EUROC

PUBLISHER - MGM INTERACTIVE

FORMAT - CD

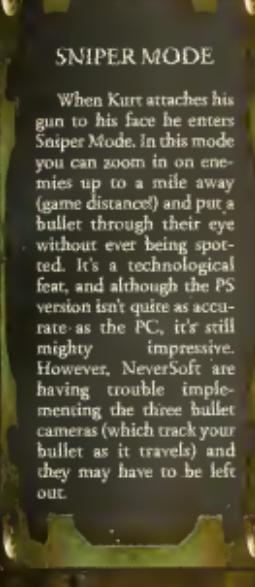
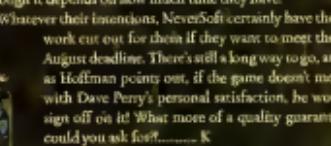
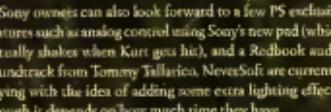
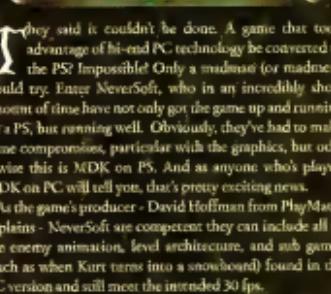
1 OR PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - ADVANCED

AVAILABLE - AUGUST '97



GLITCH
Machine Hunter is "heat" to many a "droid hunter!"



SNIPER MODE

When Kurt attaches his gun to his face he enters Sniper Mode. In this mode you can zoom in on enemies up to a mile away (game distance) and put a bullet through their eye without ever being spotted. It's a technological feat, and although the PS version isn't quite as accurate as the PC, it's still mighty impressive. However, NeverSoft are having trouble implementing the three bullet cameras (which track your bullet as it travels) and they may have to be left out.

Alien Fiends Beware...



So, what have we learned about Blasto since we last met? Well, we know that it's a major title for Sony, that it sports a super hero with a massive upper body and Yosemite Sam's legs, and that software mip-mapping and z-buffering are being implemented in software, the result being clean textures up close.



and smooth, polys as you pass, without any of that

thing) and lots of shootin' stuff. Yeehaw!

Textures are currently being added to further enhance the visuals, which I'm told look phenomenal in motion. It'll all be perfectly clear soon enough as Blasto will have been played by all in time for our post-show report next month. ES

U
UPDATE



PlayStation

DEVELOPER - SONY
PUBLISHER - SONY
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1
DIFFICULTY - ?
AVAILABLE - FALL



E. STORM

It's all about Soxy style. You gotta reckonize!

he leads worping we see so much. As far as the gameplay goes, judging by these early screens, Blasto is obviously a 3D adventure loaded with hot pyrotechnics, inspired lighting effects, lots of play mechanics (we know he flies, for one

Blasto is coming!

NAMCO

NAMCO MUSEUM VOLUME IV

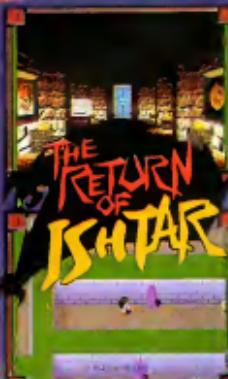


Look, it's another Museum from Namco. Featuring more classic titles, Volume 4's exhibits include *Assault*, *Pac-Land*, *Ordyne*, *The Genji* and *Heike Clans*, and *The Return of Ishitar*.

Like other Museum releases, Volume 4 has all the amenities you've come to expect. You've got your game art and the elaborate virtual museum itself (which is quite cool in Vol. 4). As for the games, it's your usual mix of titles that are fun to revisit and those that are simply just "there." Here's a quick rundown on everything you'll receive when you pick up Volume 4. *Assault*, the neat rotating overhead tank game is, surprisingly enough, compatible with Sony's dual analog stick. *Overkill?* To be sure, but cool anyhow. *Ordyne* is still a simple and cutesy side scrolling shooter. *Pac-Land*, with its strange control scheme, will probably only appeal to those with fond memories attached to playing the game when it was new (or have a *Pac-Man* fetish). *Genji*, which it

isn't mistaken also appeared on PC Engine, is a side scrolling/overhead actioner where the view sometimes switches to this weird close up that is bizarre looking and strange to play. Finally, *Ishitar* (sequel to *Tower of Druaga*), though not as bad as the Beatty/Hoffman megalopolis of the eighties, is a rather mundane action RPG, that again, can probably only be appreciated for its sentimental value.

If you ask me, pretty much any game that's on a Museum collection is sort of beyond any manner of harsh criticism. Simply enjoy these classics for what they are and what they were. **SD**



DEVELOPER - NAMCO

PUBLISHER - NAMCO

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - JULY



SUBSTANCE B

How about another trip to the museum. You're cultured, right?



Poy Poy

KONAMI-SURPRISES THE NATION!!
MULTI-PLAYER MAYHEM AT ITS BEST!!



FIND HIDDEN SURPRISES!
SECRETS LURK IN THE
CONTEST MODE!!

Poy Poy (AKA Konami's Point) is what I like to call a 'party' game: a novelty title that succeeds purely on the basis of its multi-player mode. Obviously that means it's a game that can only be truly appreciated if you have the right set up (i.e. a multi-top, four pals and three friends who don't suck at games), but in the right conditions such titles can produce some of gaming's finest moments. Case in point: where would we be without the ultimate party game, Bomberman?

The principle behind Poy Poy is as simple as it gets: Enter one of six different arenas with three other contestants and just throw stuff around. Preferably at each other. That's it. No punching, no guns, no combos—just throw stuff. You can throw rocks, logs, eggs, bombs, hexes, heck, you can even throw each other. Anything not attached to the ground is ammunition! Every time you get hit (or are thrown) you take damage, and the last person left standing is the winner. Game Over.

Ok, to be fair it's a little more complex than that, but not very. There are environmental hazards to be avoided (like whirlwinds and dinosaurs), dozens of special throws to choose from and different characters with varying physical attributes. But no matter how you dress it up you're still just chucking things around.

Thankfully, chucking things around in Poy Poy is a blast.

The controls are instinctive and responsive, the gameplay is fast and competitive (ganging up on the leader is a must) and once you get the hang of things you realize that there is some strategy in there. Kind of. The graphics are smooth and clean, if a little simple, but they fit the tone of the game perfectly, as do the whimsical tunes and effects.

If you're in the position to enjoy four-player multi-top gaming on a regular basis, then I'd say Poy Poy is a must buy. It's up there with Bomberman and Death Tank at the top of the multi-player gaming ladder. Just don't even consider it as a one player game. One final observation: It seems to me that Poy Poy would make an excellent N64 cartridge. How 'bout it Konami? **K**



KNIGHTMARE
The best party game
since Bomberman!

R
REVIEW



DEVELOPER - KONAMI

PUBLISHER - KONAMI

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1 TO 4

DIFFICULTY - EASY

AVAILABLE - JULY

THE LEGEND COMES HOME FOR THE LAST TIME...
FINALLY, THE WAY IT WAS MEANT TO BE.

STREET FIGHTER II

• C • O • L • L • E • C • T • I • O • N •

There are three video games worthy enough to truly be called legends. One created the side-scrolling action genre. One created the格斗 (beat 'em up) genre. These three games are Super Mario Bros., Dragon Quest, and Street Fighter II. Super Mario Bros. and Dragon Quest are console originals, and for all time will remain the perfect in their original state. Street Fighter II, however, is an arcade game. Think about it: up until now, every version of Street Fighter I and II played at home has been flawed. There has been no timetable to truly own SFII until now. Utilizing the power of 32-bit, Capcom is breathing new copies of the original Super SFII and Super Turbo for the Saturn and PlayStation. Unfortunately, many SF fans' absolute favorite, SF Turbo, is not in, but the super-sexy and much badder game (you can't say anything yet, but you'll be very very happy with it). Truly a game you never expected to get at home.



RED - CAPCOM

PRO - CAPCOM

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 2

DIFFICULTY - VARIABLE

AVAILABLE - SUMMER

SHIN BOX

笑止!!

P
PREVIEW



PlayStation



笑止!!

SUPER STREET FIGHTER II

SHIN BOX

笑止!!



P **PREVIEW**  PlayStation

DEVELOPER - TOP DOG	1-2
PUBLISHER - KIDS GAMES	WTF
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - NOVEMBER 10

**GLITCH**Take it to
the...?

One of last year's best off-road racing games is back for a second time in TNV *Hardcore 2*. ASC and developers Top Dog are preparing the sequel, featuring loads of new tracks, trucks, and insane conditions.

ASC is ambitious. They claim to have an amazing 60 fps engine in preparation for *Hardcore 2*. The version we played was definitely NOT pulling 60 fps, but more

power to 'em if they can get it up and running. Either way, *Hardcore 2* is a sequel in the purest sense of the word. This time around there's 16 all-new tracks, including The Grand Canyon, Las Vegas Desert, Colorado Mountains, New Orleans Sumppland, and Indoor Stadium. They're much bigger than the tracks in the original *Hardcore*, with huge, wide open environments, and massive dips and hills. Expect 10 new trucks, all of them highly detailed models designed from the ground up.

There will also be a number of other features, including night time driving and weather-related conditions (snow, rain, fog, etc.) More *Hardcore 2* details should be coming soon, including (hopefully) a few new playable tracks. **G**



COLLIDERZ



a huge problem. In an effort to end the madness, the CCL (Colliderz Combat League) was formed in order to sort out all alien disputes once under one set of rules. That's the exciting (right) story behind *Colliderz*, ASC's upcoming entry into the cyber-sports genre.

Colliderz is a September title, and as such the gameplay is still very early. Commanding small hovering vehicles (not people or cyborgs) you must battle for possession of a floating glow-ball and launch it into the opposition's goal to score. Thus far, ramming the competition is enough to get control of the ball, but that should change as ASC are planning to add weapons to the multitude of selectable vehicles. By project's end, the total amount of unique *Colliderz* crafts will number in the thousands!

Colliderz will feature loads of game modes, including championships, tournaments, and grudge matches. Expect 16 teams, 20 arenas, power-ups, shields, and a multi-player mode. You can also customize your team, vehicles, and weaponry to meet your personal preferences. Well, that's it for *Colliderz* at this point... We'll keep you in the loop. **G**



P **PREVIEW**  PlayStation

DEVELOPER - ANGULIN (EN)	1-2
PUBLISHER - ASC GAMES	WTF
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - SEPTEMBER 10

**GLITCH**Another year
of cyber
sports...

IN DEVELOPMENT

HOLY SCOOP-TASTIC, BATMAN! GAMEFAN HAS A HOT EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH THE CREATIVE YET CRIMINAL MINDS BEHIND THE INCREDIBLE, ALL-NEW PLAYSTATION BATMAN GAME



BATMAN ROBIN

Batman and Robin game. Fortunately, his bat-signals weren't in vain, as scooting across the Atlantic from their Croydon (near London) headquarters came Joe Bonar (Project Leader) and Guy Mills (Lead Artist).



HOLY SCREENSHOTS BATMAN! EXCLUSIVE BATMAN & ROBIN PICS

GameFan battled for many hours to wrestle these burning shots from those caged crusaders of justice. Batman and Robin is in two distinct parts: a Tomb Raider-style step through various Gotham locales, interspersed with a die Hard II-style epic race through the streets in the Batmobile. We spoke to Probe at great length about the size of the game, the differences between this and previous Probe products, and just why they've got a special "cape" programmer working solely on the Bat-team's waiting rubber cloaks. The result is in a somewhat "freeform" interview, packed with all manner of interesting tidbits. We take up the "chat" as we watch the Batmobile zip around a 30 polygon city...

GM: Essentially, what we wanted to do was to take the technology that we used in Die Hard [With a Vengeance] and expand on it so you have really huge environments. We originally planned on Gotham being 60 square kilometers, but you kept on getting lost!

GM: Batman has stepped out of the Batmobile to investigate a building. Is there a concealed plot, or can you essentially go anywhere?

JB: Batman has received and deciphered a clue. You're never given anything obviously in this game like "GO TO THE END" or "FIND THIS ITEM AND GO THERE". You start in the barbecue and just use Batman's problem-solving abilities. Batman will see a clue on the street or on his computer and act on it, and so the game progresses.

To the disgust of the assembled GameFan posse (except perhaps for Shideehi), Chief Hambleton recently stripped butt-naked, covered himself in talc, struggled into a tight rubber outfit and a pair of pointy ears and leapt from building to building, this strange summoning ritual was to uncover the latest scoop on the new

Batman and Robin game. Fortunately, his bat-signals weren't in vain, as scooting across the Atlantic from their Croydon (near London) headquarters came Joe Bonar (Project Leader) and Guy Mills (Lead Artist).



GM: So this is a lot more complicated than just a 3D version of the usual Batman side-scrolling bop 'em up?

JB: Absolutely. Gotham is ten square kilometers big, totally open and you can go anywhere at any time. However, the two guys have got their own agenda. They're up to no good and acting out the rules they play in the film. Mr. Freeze is going around knocking off the Diamond Nut, stealing stuff from the museum and then freezing the whole place. He's doing exactly what he does in the film. You have to get there before he does, or, while he's there in order to kick his a** [British terminology for the American word 'ass']. If you kick his a**, he'll regroup and carry with his objectives, as will Poison Ivy.

GM: Batman has entered the museum now. Tell us about the cut-scenes.

GM: In order to provide people with a more "filmic" experience, yet go onto the door, and when it opens, the whole building is sprung sound-in real-time. This gives a little bit of film setting while the game looks like the GM: [laughs] GM: It's not very well, but the real-time cut-scenes keep you in a believable environment. You're never pulled out of the environment and that's one reason why Tomb Raider was so successful.

GM: Now that we're in the museum, the action is very much like Tomb Raider. What's Batman's plan now?

JB: Well, he's trying to get the crystal before Mr. Freeze does.

HOLY HIGH SCREENS! THE FIRST SHOTS OF BATMAN & ROBIN, THE GLORIOUS 3D RIDE THROUGH THE STREETS OF GOTHAM CITY.



HOLY PROGRAMMERS, BATMAN! JOE BONAR, PROJECT LEADER

"Essentially, what we wanted to do was to take the technology that we used in Die Hard [With a



is fighting mode and paces around a little more slowly in detective mode. You have an action button which is used to look, examine, use or fight, kick or punch. All three characters [you can play as Batman, Robin or Batgirl] have loads of fighting moves and each individual has some unique special moves. Batgirl has some dirty [Note: British terminology for the word 'unfair' or 'cheating'] moves. Robin has some dirty moves as well. They're a little bit like numbers. When you get into a fight, the camera moves slightly up and to the side so you can see a bit more of what's going on.

You can side-step, climb and jump and have a lot of 'flinger-gets' to use as well. Warner Brothers has kindly let us use some of their Bataray tools so we can have some fairly devastating weapons in there. Batman will also have his unique style of fighting; you'll be able to hold a bad guy up and smash him while at the same time pushing someone behind him. And there's loads of big weapons as well! You can also swap characters at any time. You must return to the Bat Cave though. However, you could play Batgirl all the way through the game, but you'd have to play a snappy game! I'll give you an example. Say you came into a huge room in Batman and it was full of bad guys. You'd beat everyone up and continue. But Batgirl would have to climb up onto the balcony and sneak past. She's the only one who's fast enough to stand on the balcony. Similarly, Batman has great strength, but his weight can trigger traps that other characters can avoid. Robin is the medium character between the two.

GM Is there going to be a set of difficulty levels?

JB No. The reason is that if we have three characters and loads of difficulty settings, we'd be developing for another year! But it starts off straightforward and gets nastier the further you go along. Eventually, the whole of Gotham is yours, and then you'll have to change your mode of transport. Also, each character has two different costumes. Batman has a really cool armored costume which he uses later into the game. Really nice and silver!

GM What about replay value?

JB The game isn't the same every time you play it. There's a game clock which runs over three days, and certain events will happen at set times. What we've also done is produce other events between the set events that occur randomly. You know what's coming next, but not exactly where it's going to happen or when it's going to happen; that's going to help you to find things out. But it's not so random that it becomes annoying. We're also taking advantage of the fact that Batman is such a top bloke! [Note: British terminology for the expression 'great guy'] and can't stand to see anyone suffer. There'll be smuggling going on in the street, and Batman will be driving to the

HOLY MOTION PICTURES, BATMAN! ACTION FROM BATMAN & ROBIN

"We've been very lucky in getting snippets of dialog from the actual movie, as well as the faces for the entire main cast."

Hammond Marti, he knows Freeze is there, but someone's robbing a bank nearby. "Oh what are you going to do! I know, I'll beat these guys up and hope to get them in time!"

GM Are the actual actors recording speech for the game?
JB We've been very lucky in getting snippets of dialog from the actual movie, as well as the faces for the entire main cast. We wanted to enable a player to actually take part in the movie they'd just seen and to further suspend their disbelief, we got the real [dialog]. For example, Jim [Lee] says [about unconvincing Schemerine accents] "Chill! You've got all the great one-liners. We want to give the player an experience... however, you don't have to watch the film to play the game, but it might help!"

GM How long has this game been in development?

JB Well, since *Alien Trilogy* started [around mid-1995], we took the best bits of *Alien Trilogy* and *Die Hard* and refined it and refined it some more. *Batman* as a project has been around for about 18 months [as of Friday, May 2, 1997] and we've got about 4 months to flesh and then test it until we're happy with it. It will be tested at Probe in May.

GM The game certainly looks impressive enough. Did you make a conscious decision to try something different?

JB This was an absolutely 100 percent conscious decision to get away from *Final Fantasy*. It really isn't like any other previous Batman game. Originally it was going to be a first-person [Doom-style], but we really wanted to put the cape in, and so that's what we could see the Batman model, we zoomed the camera out and we thought, "Aw this just looks so COOL!" But how are we going to do the cape? We're tackling the cape problem in four ways, in software, as a sprite, part of the soft-skin and, or, another way that I can't remember.

Going back to the soft skin again, the character is made up of bones. The motion that we capture is applied to the bones, and then we have a skin over the top which is a mesh of polygons. Then a piece of software defines the relationship between the bones and the skin. A hard skin on an arm crunches into the body with polygon break-up. A soft skin stretches the polygons instead to make the character more natural.

With the cape, we tried animation and sprites, but it was too time consuming; it would have taken our artists three months just to draw every eventuality, and a great fat sprite would have looked mad! Drawing each sprite would have driven our artists completely bonkers

and would have looked a bit pants as well [Note: 'pants' is a British expression, in this case used to mean 'unconvincing']. So what we did was construct it in software. They say it couldn't be done... but we did it! We've attached a 3D mesh of polygons and made a flag algorithm so when the character moves, the cape flows with it, falling onto the chest and creating a realistic effect [Note: The effect is very similar to the ways in *Darken*. The model pushes the cape out rather than jutting through it. We have a 'cape programmer' stalled in para mode who's taking the next three months to program it all!]

Finally, this game is cerebral. I think people are tired of just hitting envelopes on screen. Of course there's character battles, but I think people are ready for a more thoughtful style of exploratory play. And of course, you get to drive all the cool vehicles!

GM Thank you very much for taking time out to show us the game.

Chief Hambleton and the entire GameFan staff would like to thank Joe Bonar, Guy Mills, Accolade and Warner Bros. Interactive.



HOLY SKETCHINGS, BATMAN! GUY MILLS, LEAD ARTIST

"There's FMV in it as well, but the real-time cut scenes keep you in a believable environment."

FELONY 11-79

Some remarkably 'kewky' car antics are soon to appear courtesy of ASCII and their newest (and certainly best) racing/carnage title, *Felony 11-79*. A direct port of the Japanese title *Rumbleout*, ASCII has wisely decided to bring this over to America as soon as possible and with good reason: those gamers weaned on a diet of *Ridge Racer* and *Twisted Metal* are going to adore this epitome of arcade cruising carnage! Why? Because it features all the best parts of these three titles and mixes them up into a perfect driving frenzy!

First, there's cars... 22 of them. Yep, that's right! And these aren't your average paint-swapped racers either! Nope, we're talking limousines, Mini Coopers, street sweepers, scooters, Lamborghinis (even a tank); you name it, *Felony 11-79* has a drivable version in here! Sure, you start with four cars, and then (with the police hot on your tail) you cruise through road blocks, over billboards and through hotel lobbies in a frenzy of driving annihilation in downtown and seaside areas of Japan, Chinatown and Paris!

So, you're flying down the highway with the cops hunting you down and suddenly... BAM! Your already-molested motor bursts into flames! Time to honk out of your vehicle and hunt another down! Then the nail-bitingly tense action continues as you hot-wire your next motor; it screeches into life and you swerve to dodge entire squads of the law's finest. "Traffic laws? Pah! Ramming speed!" was the scream as insanely packed streets were weaved through in an epic chase to rival *The Italian Job*!

Add to the mix some real-time light-sourcing and car deformation ("Oops, me wheel's off") you'll cry as sparks light up the underside of your car), completely navigable streets and different secret vehicles appearing depending on your progress, and you're well on your way to understanding how hot this game looks! In fact, the only problem we have is the game's actual title. After phoning the L.A. Sheriff's Department, we were told that a "Felony 11-79" was "failure to appear in court" so quite why the cops are "responding to a Felony 11-79 in progress" (to quote ASCII's advertising blurb) and thirty cop cars are chasing your player across town for a late judicial appearance remains somewhat of a mystery to us. But hey, the game looks so good, we'll let ASCII off on good behavior. CB

11-79

TOTAL TIME
02:07:46

LEVEL 10
TOTAL POINTS
612600

173



100% SPEED!



P
PREVIEW



DEVELOPER: CLIMAX

PUBLISHER: ASCII

FORMAT: CD

1-2 PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY: MIA

AVAILABLE - 3RD QUARTER



CHIEF
HAMBLETON
Coi car carnage
courtesy of
Climax





"STARRING" BRUCE WILLIS



This month, GameFan got their hands on a two level playable demo of Activision's forthcoming shooter—the first ever videogame to star a major A-list Hollywood star: Bruce Willis. The demo is ultra-early (almost pre-alpha) but the various gameplay elements are starting to come together, and even though there's a long way to go, we were still able to get a sense of what producer Michael Kirby and his team are aiming for: a 32-bit update of classic overhead shooters like *Commando* and *Ikari Warriors*.

The playable demo consists of the first two levels of the game: the prison stage, where Trey Kincaid (Bruce Willis) breaks you out, and the rooftop stage immediately following. The levels are large (Activision has employed asynchronous loading) with detailed environments and interactive scenery. I particularly like the Tron-style prison cells that you run along on top of as you make your escape, with screaming prisoners contained within.

Activision has wisely decided to go with a *Robotron* X-style control setup (the four main buttons fire in all four directions), leaving the L and R buttons free for secondary functions like jumping and crouching. It's an instinctive system, and one which demonstrates Activision's commitment towards gameplay. With a project this big, it's nice to know that the developers have their feet firmly planted on the ground.

Currently, Bruce Willis' character is not yet implemented, but in the final version he will act as a computer controlled player 2, fighting alongside you and responding to your performance with comments and actions of his own. The intelligent camera system was also not functioning properly, though occasionally it would move to set a tag for dramatic effect, like looking down on you as you jump the gap between two roof tops. More as we get it. **A**



P
PREVIEW



DEVELOPER - ACTIVISION

PUBLISHER - ACTIVISION

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - N/A

AVAILABLE - SEPTEMBER



KNIGHTMARE
Smash TV meets
Commando, is 3D,
starring Bruce! **C**

G-Police

PSYGNOSIS • SHOOTING • WINTER

G-Police lives! First appearing as one of Psygnosis' initial PlayStation announcements, this *Blade Runner*-influenced shooter was thought lost forever when it disappeared from the release list last year. Well, it's back, and looking better than ever!

G-Police features an impressive real-time 3D environment, fast action, and over 35 varied missions all wrapped around a unique concept and solid storyline. Piloting a heavily-armed Havoc jet helicopter, it is up to you to keep the streets and skyways of Callisto (yeah, the Jupiter Moon Callisto) free from evil—meanwhile trying to solve the mysterious death of your sister, a former G-Police pilot. Look for a preview in our E3 report next issue!



Tomb Raider 2

EIDOS • ADVENTURE • OCTOBER

Now this is the game to watch for... *Tomb Raider 2* takes the captivating play design from the original, and massively upgrades it with much more intricate levels, all-new day and night modes, the ability to ride a jet-ski, new weapons and items, new hair styles (!) and much, much more. Look for a full preview, along with a bunch of new shots, next month. For now, take a look at these pictures, and dream... Less than four months to go!

(Please note: These shots are from the PC version.)



COMING SOON: PLAYSTATION

• Colony Wars •

PSYGNOSIS • SHOOTER • WINTER



• Overboard! •

PSYGNOSIS • ACTION • WINTER



• Carom Shot •

• Carom Shot •

ASCII • SIMULATION • WINTER

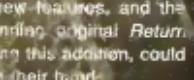
It's been a while since you've had a chance to play a game that's as simple as it is fun. Carom Shot is a great example of a game that's been around for a long time but still holds up well. It's a 3D billiards game that's been updated to feature a story-based mode. As you play through the game, you'll have to collect and build your way to success in one-dimensional states of life. There's even a billiards table that features ultra-realistic ball physics.



• Return Fire 2 •

MGM • ACTION/STRAT. • WINTER

Return Fire 2 is a follow-up to the original Return Fire, which was released in 1998. The game features a variety of new weapons, including 20 new units, enhanced AI, and a new campaign mode. The game also includes a variety of new weather conditions, as well as a new multiplayer mode and an enhanced one-player game. Despite new features, the fact that the award-winning original *Return Fire*'s creator is designing this addition, could mean MGM has a hit on their hands.



• Treasures of the Deep •

NAMCO • ADVENTURE • WINTER



Treasures of the Deep allows you to explore Earth's last frontier. You get to be a hunting down fabled lost treasures, fighting off other hunters, and battling the occasional giant sea bass. Originally developed by Black Ops, the folks responsible for *Black Dawn* and *Agile Warrior F-111X*, Namco definitely purchased the rights to distribute *Treasures*—and it's easy to see why. *Treasures* is an underwater *Tomb Raider* by many. *Treasures* immerses you in the ocean world—yours to fully experience. You can skim along the ocean floor, dive into ancient ruins, or protect a rare breed of sea turtles from becoming dinner. While most of the missions are based around finding certain (well hidden) treasures, other levels deal with environmental issues and the like. Until what we've seen, *Treasures of the Deep* has high potential to become one of the ever-increasing number of "must have" PlayStation titles. Look for a full review very soon!



• Psybadek •

PSYGNOSIS • RACING • WINTER

Leave it up to the team who brought us *WipeOut* to create a new look in racing games, this time in the form of Psygnosis' *Psybadek*. Don't let the name, or strange characters, deter you from this totally intuitive racing/platforming title. With a graphical look apparently influenced by Japanese Anime, *Psybadek* puts you in the role as a deformed little dude, who has to out-race (and out-perform) the competition in order to save his friends. Sure, it looks and sounds silly, but Psygnosis promises a fast engine and lots of fun... Who knows, this could be the surprise hit of the year! Reibus, our resident *CoolBoarders* expert, can't wait to see this one in action!



COMING SOON: PLAYSTATION

• Army Men •

3DO • ACTION/STRAT. • EARLY '98

It's the same old black market string with the conversion of their promised game to 3DO. What makes *Army Men* good? Not only does it have a solid strategy game play (very similar to *Herzog Zwei*), hot 3D rendered graphics, and a great sound track, but you get to send little green army men into battle. And in the attempt to make this game as "realistic" as possible, 3DO spent unimaginable amounts of time making the characters and vehicles look like the truly trash of plastic, right down to the way they melt when hit with a bullet or a fire. This attention to detail, along with the extensive game play and replay elements, makes *Army Men* a strong contender in the quickly-flooding console action/strategy market. "Run! Run, even if they shoot yer arms off, boys!"

PlayStation. The game looks like the PC version.



• Courier Crisis •

BMG • RACING/ACTION • WINTER

Seemingly heavily motivated by the gameplay found in *Road Rash*, *Courier Crisis* has you speeding down long streets, punching and kicking the opposition, while at the same time avoiding traffic and other obstacles. Sound familiar? Well, this time you're on a bike instead of a motorcycle—along with facing distinct "missions" to complete rather than just trying to win a race. GT Bicycle professional riders were brought in to enhance the game play, and the development team designed a new "organic" animation style

to give *CC* an impressive graphical flare. *Courier Crisis* looks to be the perfect "fix" for those who long for the next *Road Rash*...





Clock Tower
ASCII • ADVENTURE • FALL

If *D* and *Resident Evil* have taught us anything, it's that horror can be downright fun. And in knowing the unfortunate lack of originality in the genre, ASCII is bringing over one of Japan's most popular horror games, *Clock Tower 2*. Re-labeled *Clock Tower* in America, the game puts you (for all intents and purposes) directly into a classic horror setting. You play as a young female who knows something is wrong about her stupidly oblivious companions who fail to realize the approaching evil. Familiar theme, eh? You spend most of the game trapped in a Norwegian mansion, continually chased by a scissors-wielding serial killer. You have to save your friends, and you can do so by using objects around the house to slow him down. From what we've seen of the Japanese original, it's safe to say *CT 2* will certainly appeal to those who seek a thrill in their game-playing. Oh yeah, we must also mention the game takes place in the heart of all things dark and evil. That's right... Norway!

You've been warned...

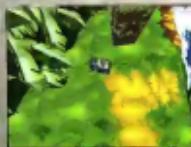
• Motor Mash •

TBA • RACING • TBA

"More fun than a drunk baboon. On roller skates." Yes! If that official tag-line doesn't get you excited about *Motor Mash*, I don't know what would. Anyway, once you get over that unsettling quote, the rest of the game starts looking better. *Motor Mash*, to put it simply, is a humorous rally racing title filled with themed tracks and silly drivers. It does have impressive graphics though, and the track design (filled with interactive shortcuts) appears to be top-notch, meaning *Motor Mash* could turn out to be quite a solid racer. Look

for more on *Motor Mash* in an upcoming issue of *GameFan*. Um, maybe.

Please note: These shots are from the PC version.



COMING SOON: PLAYSTATION

• Uprising •**3DO • ACTION/STRAT • EARLY '98**

It's been said that *Uprising* will be the first PlayStation game just might revolutionize the 3D combat-shoot 'n' slash of action/strategy titles. Combining the best elements from classic strategy games and 3D shooters, *Uprising* puts you in command of an army of tanks (led by a "Wraith") against a formidable army in a realistic 3D world. Separating this title from other tank-based shooters is the fact that you are in command of an army of allied troops, tanks, gunships, and bombers; all of which need to be directed to complete certain tasks if you are to leave the battlefield victorious. And as in most strategy games, you may upgrade your army's weapons (along with your personal vehicle) by researching new technologies. *Uprising* also boasts the ability to play quick arcade-type missions, or large-scale campaigns complete with detailed mission objectives.

Production: This screenshot is from the PC version.

**• Shadow Master •****PSYGNOSIS • SHOOTER • WINTER**

Hmm... Psygnosis must love the holiday season. Anyway, their sixth title scheduled for this winter might have a familiar gameplay engine, but *Shadow Master* could turn out to be one of the more "visually stimulating" shooters ever released. Based on the futuristic/organic artwork of British designer Rodney Matthews, *SM* has ultra-detailed environments and dramatic graphical effects (such as dynamic lighting and the almost-standard lens flares). Each mission takes place in a large 3D world, infested with spectacular enemies, which include giant spiders, dragons, trypids and the like. Also, most of the levels require you to complete some storyline-influenced task (such as protecting an area, or destroying a reactor), and many also feature spectacular-looking bosses to fight.



IN DEVELOPMENT

Recently, Knightmare traveled to Todd McFarlane's studios in Phoenix, Arizona to talk to the Canadian artist about his role in the creation of the *Spawn* videogame, amongst other things. This is what happened...



GF: How did *Spawn* come to be?

Todd: I guess I created him in about '78, '79. Everybody doodles. As a comic book guy, everybody creates their own characters. So by the time I broke into comics in '84, he was just something that I had in my portfolio. The tougher part came when we actually started Image [McFarlane's publishing company] and I had to give a life and a universe to this guy.

GF: What sources did you draw on for inspiration?

Todd: I had to ask myself, what's this guy gonna be about? And the easy answer is: What if it was *Spawn*? What would I do in this situation? Given that I don't really consider myself to be a strong writer, you just have to play to your own strengths. So who do I know better than anybody else? Me. And who's important to me? My wife, Wanda.

GF: *Spawn's* wife is also called Wanda.

Todd: It's not by accident that *Spawn's* wife is named Wanda or that his best pal is Terry Fitzgerald. I just intersect personal things in the book. But you know, I don't pay attention to that anymore. People just think it's a joke when they meet these characters in real life. "Yeah, sure, you're Terry Fitzgerald!"

GF: *Spawn* has a very stylized look. How important do you consider that to the book's success?

Todd: That's the biggest thing that anybody can come up with. What sets artists apart is their style. Not so much their talent, although talent is tied into style, but more the idea of how does each artist paint that apple. And then mix that in with the body of work and do enough issues of a character and all of a sudden it just clicks. It's like, Flash isn't the coolest guy on earth, but he's been around forever. Everybody knows Flash.

GF: Do you read a lot of comics?

Todd: No. Not now.

GF: But you used to?

Todd: I used to read a lot of comic books. I also used to watch TV and go see the odd movie.

GF: Were you influenced by any of these things?

Todd: What I put into my work are the things that I remember about the other stuff. Not what it actually was, but what I remember it as being—the sensation that I was left with. And that's the sensation I try to convey. *Spawn* is about mood, and about atmosphere, and weirdness, and an attitude. It's not just about a guy who's 6' foot 3 and has to find his wife. It's about the bigger element.

GF: *Spawn* is also darker than most of the mainstream stuff. Any particular reason?

Todd: I just like the creepy stuff. The weird stuff. Once you have that piece in your brain, and obviously I got it there... I just like to play with it. I don't need to be inspired by too many things. I'm just "Oh, that's kind of creepy, I'll use that." I just make stuff up.

GF: Give us an example.

Todd: Ok. I had to convey the essence of evil. So how do I do it? Well most people see good as white and bad as black. Even in cowboy movies. So evil is black, and that means that evil manifests more at night when there's no light.

"*Spawn* is about mood, and about atmosphere, and weirdness, and an attitude."





The people who 'get' *Spawn* are also the people who play videogames.

Ok, so who are the conduits of evil? Who absorbs the evil on the planet? Well my wife's a biologist and I remember her saying that worms don't have eyes. They're creatures that live under the ground in darkness, and if they ever come to the surface, because they have no eyes, they're still in darkness. So somehow worms are the sponges of evil. Now a worm in itself isn't creepy, but if you take 10 million worms and you pour them over someone, then that's the coolest thing! So all of sudden you do the thing where he's got worms all over him, or he's got worms in his mouth, and it creates this great effect. The end result is actually much cooler than the beginning which is: I need something without eyeballs. You go, "Whoah! Worms! Millions of worms! Conduits of evil!" That's a cool thing!

GF: Are you worried about the religious implications of *Spawn*'s story? Are you trying to interpret the bible?

Todd: Actually I find the best thing to do is just make stuff up. If you stay too true to the bible as is, that's almost more insulting. It's almost better to just go 25 feet away from it.

GF: From your talk earlier I got the feeling that you're not really that interested in videogames. Does that mean you're not interested in the *Spawn* game?

Todd: It's not that I'm not interested in the games, it's just I'm not very adept at them. I mean, I'm a psycho for hockey and I can't even skate! So it doesn't preclude me from being impressed by a game. It's just that if you gave one to me, I wouldn't really know how to work it. What I'm more concerned about is to think, "What would be cool if I could play?" I just pretend I'm a pro, I go, "If I was making a *Spawn* game I'd like this and this and this."

GF: So what kind of input have you had on the *Spawn* game?

Todd: Well obviously all the big stuff. You know, the characters and the levels.

GF: Have you had any influence on the way the game plays?

Todd: What has ended up happening is that my ignorance of games is actually beneficial. I'll ask them (Sony) about things which may or may not be possible in a game, and sometimes I'll trip over an answer which is, "We never thought of that. We can do that—it's just nobody's ever asked that question before." The last time Sony was here we went over 25 things and on at least three of them they were like,

"Why not? We can do that." And I didn't know that you couldn't. I didn't know there were games out there that didn't do that.

GF: Can you give us an example?

Todd: Well, for instance when *Spawn*'s running through the catacombs and there's light hitting him, why can't the light affect him? Why isn't he lit? And also every time he's running, why is everything in the background kind of straight line, straight floor stuff? Why is the perspective always so square? Can't we tilt some angles? Because depth comes from creating more than one or two planes. In comic books you can stretch and contract the panel to create the illusion of depth. But because the plane of your TV screen is always the same, and because you can't move the camera around too much, the answer is to create the depth in the environment.

GF: How do you do that?

Todd: Oh, let me give you an example of something I think we're gonna put in there: *Spawn*'s running through the catacombs. Why does he obviously have to run kind of forward? Why can't the half squeeze or taper? Then maybe he'll have to turn sideways, and kind of inch himself through. Or why can't the ceiling lower so that he has to get down and crawl and then come out. I mean it's still basically getting him from point A to point B, but what it adds in my mind is body language. If he just runs the same way as a 100 other characters then what makes the game different? That's what I'm concerned with. I know you have to do things basically within a set formula, but is there anyway we can add a little salt and pepper to the meat?

GF: Are you happy with the way your characters look as polygon models?

Todd: They've explained to me that there's two different ways to do it. You can go the polygon route or you can go the 2D sprite route, where the characters actually look photo-realistic but it limits the gameplay. Given that we didn't have access to the movie costumes or some of the really cool stuff when the project started, it was like, which one of the two methods would give us the most creative freedom? Especially since we're dealing with a lot of figures that aren't human. I mean, I can see that in *Mortal Kombat*'s case, where you've got real people, it makes sense to use digitized graphics. But we're dealing with some really odd shaped creatures. They're not men in rubber suits. So let's do the best we can given that this is the box we have to

work within.

GF: Do you think videogames are an appropriate medium for *Spawn*?

Todd: When I started this big roller coaster ride, I felt that there were four areas which were important: TV, movies, electronics and toys. I thought that, if I could hit all four of those blocks, then I could build something very strong. And electronics and videogames is one of those blocks. It's not a throwaway idea. "That's toothpaste and that's the other stuff." Because it's the same kind of audience as the other parts. The people who get *Spawn* are also the people who play videogames.

GF: You think there's a crossover in the audience?

Todd: Sure. But on the other hand, there's a lot of people that buy videogames that have never even heard of *Spawn* or seen one of my toys and maybe won't even go to the movie. But if the videogame is cool and has this eerie atmosphere and is something that doesn't try to pander then maybe when they see a commercial that has all those same edges to it, they might be more inclined to go, "Well, the game's kind of cool, and if the movie's anything like the game..." And I'm not saying the movie is like the game, but I think the edge is the same on both of them, and if you like the dark, moody atmosphere of the game, and the creepiness of it, then I think you'll like the other things I do.

GF: You mentioned earlier about your plans after *Spawn*. Do you ever feel the need to start something different?

Todd: A part of me says, "You've done *Spawn*, you've hit this market, now try something else." The two markets that I haven't hit are adults and kids. You know the mom that won't endorse *Spawn*, and the kids that are too young for *Spawn*. My guess would be that if I was to exercise anything further down the line it wouldn't be, necessarily, more manifestations of my adolescent stuff, although I think that's the coolest pool to dip into. But I'd like to say here's something for Dad, here's something for the teenagers and here's something for the kids and they're not connected. I got a 5 year old kid. They're not going to watch the animation. So I'd like to do something for them.

GF: Thanks for your time.

Todd: No problem.

ARE YOU READY
TO POUND 64-
BIT CLAY?

ELLOS FROSTY

ELLOS FROSTY

ELLOS FROSTY

ELLOS FROSTY

As key elements begin to be installed into Interplay's much anticipated first N64 release, *CF 63 'n a third*, the designers' vision of a comical parody of MK and SF is beginning to take shape. Carried out on both the Genesis and SNES with good results, the sparkling new N64 seems more than up to the task of taking clay poundage to a higher level. The huge 3D arenas are extremely well textured and the characters look almost - real

albeit in a Play-Dough kind of way.

Most notable in this 75% burn were the new "breakthroughs." In each area, doors/barriers leading into surrounding structures can be, well, broken through.

Should you beat, slap, kick or smash your opponent into one, the both of you will quickly find change of

CF 63 'n a third

venue/locale. Some areas feature multiple possibilities so depending on how the playfield is turned, as you fight it out in 3D, you can take the fight in a variety of directions. Whether or not these determine where the next round will take place has yet to be determined.

Eleven initial characters have been chosen to pound 64-bit clay, five returning: Bad Mr. Frosty, Blob, Bonker, Icky Bod Clay and Taffy, and six new: Kung-Pow, Houngan, HoboCop, Lady Liberty, and Dr. Klin. EWJ along with others TBA will be selectable via a secret code (shhhh) which Interplay will release after the game debuts. If we find it before hand, well, we will of course leak it, as any respectable publisher would. (I'm kidding of course.)

As far as the gameplay thus far is concerned there's some good news, and, some bad. Of course,

IF YOU CAN BEAT
ME, YOU CAN
EAT ME!

ELLOS

FROSTY

ELLOS

<

the game's not near done so the bad will likely be corrected. Good, are the combo engine, control, graphics, light sourcing, and sound. Bad, is the game's speed and character animation. While enough (barely) frames do exist for each character, they currently move at such a low frame rate it's as if every other frame is missing. This seems easy enough to fix (add frames) so I'm confident the final will be fluid. As for the game's speed, the options menu exhibits three settings, normal, whoa, and "are you nuts?" So, presuming this version is running on normal, which I'm quite sure is the case, it's safe to assume that the speed problem is a non-issue. Also problematic in this version were the camera positions. It's hardly worth mentioning since I've been assured they're being fixed, but in case they're not, well, better safe than sorry. The circumference (wow, big word, huh) of each playfield is littered with polygonal objects like crates, lab equipment, tombstones (well, you get the picture). Since they turn as you move within them, these objects come directly into view, often hiding the action until you move into the clear. I imagine that in the final they'll either go transparent or the camera will adjust by panning up. Either way, it's on the list of fixes as the game enters its final month of programming.

Once the final touches are applied expect nothing less than a fighter which not only looks fantastic but plays great, offers some new innovation and a few laughs as well. It's all in a good day's work. **ES**



LAMBORGHINI 64

Title: Lamborghini 64, due in quarter 3 (along with just about everything else), features four different racing styles: Arcade, Tournament, Championship, and Time Trial. There's mention of a secret mode as well. But hey, look at these

visuals huh? Wooh! There's only four tracks and, er, four cars (including that luxurious beast the Diablo SE) and a split screen mode is offered as well. There's a big ol' crap of N64 racers headed our way. We'll have more on this one real soon.



Diablo's got a high-powered N64 racer of their own which we played extensively and were quite impressed with. *Mulh* should be finished by the time you read this and is scheduled to appear in June. We'll review this first reality based N64 racer in the August issue.

MULTI-CHAMPIONSHIP RACING



TOP GEAR RALLY



P PREVIEW

NINTENDO 64



RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER 17
PUBLISHER: ELEVEN
DEVELOPER: ELEVEN
GENRE: RACER
DURATION: 1-2 HOURS
DIFFICULTY: ADJUSTABLE
PRICE: £39.99 (SEPTEMBER 17)



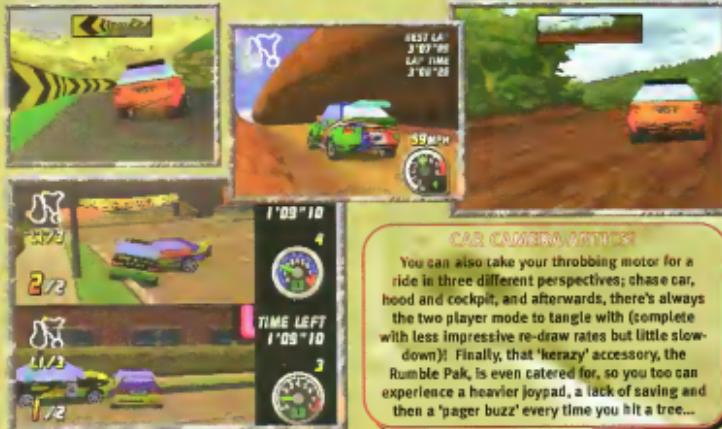
CHIEF HAMBLETON
No hideous cruisin'
antics around here!

Boss Game Studios has been busy crafting the first real driving game for the Nintendo 64. No plumbies or buggies or laughable cruisin' antics going on here; simply a load of polygon cars, huge roaming tracks and enough graphical prowess to gobsmack any potential driving junkie. With a September release currently scheduled for *Top Gear Rally*, we molested an 80 percent complete copy for an afternoon. The idea of *Top Gear Rally* was obviously to tap into the most successful racing games (notably *Sega Rally* and *Ridge Racer*) and grab the best features while implementing a ton of extra cool innovations to improve on the already-winning formula. Once you're jolting down the muddy roads of *Top Gear Rally*, you'll immediately see the influences. The result looks to be a graphically impressive and marvellously playable rally racer with more cool features than should really be allowed for one

video game.

Undoubtedly the finest aspects of *Top Gear Rally* are the car physics. There's one word to sum up the way the cars move: *Being!* That's right; each of the eleven motors available has four-wheel drive, independent suspension, meaning that it drives exactly like a rally car should. Hit a sand-dune and you'll actually see your car's wheels whirl and grip separately as the car spins back onto the track. Of course, that's not all; everything from the suspension to the shocks and the steering to the wheels can be changed, depending on your preference for off-road driving. Finally, in a nod to the cool feature present in *Ridge Racer*, Boss has gone one step

further with their 'design your paint job' option. Now you can scrawl and daub whatever you want on the entire exterior of the car! It's as if a mini version of Photoshop was added for your artistic enjoyment! Watch for the Hambleton mobile when the review



CAR CAMERA VIEWS

You can also take your throbbing motor for a ride in three different perspectives; chase car, hood and cockpit, and afterwards, there's always the two player mode to tangle with (complete with less impressive re-draw rates but little slowdown). Finally, that 'krazy' accessory, the Rumble Pak, is even catered for, so you too can experience a heavier joystick, a lack of saving and then a 'pager buzz' every time you hit a tree...

DIFFERENT WEATHER CONDITIONS

Despite the lack of different textures, Boss has still squeezed in even more additions, such as the ability to race each course in fog, rain, snow, at night or in clear weather. These features are great; in particular, the fog mode shows how the game would have looked if the *Cruis'n USA* team had got their hands on this game, the snow mode features the entire track re-texture mapped, snow tires and spin-outs, while the clear weather features... wait for it... almost no pop-up!!

comes trundling by!

At the present time of writing, the cars (alt-mod-eld after real-life vehicles as any car buff can instantly tell) control like nothing else. As far as I'm concerned, this game has the best control of any rally racing game. And it's all about analog control, baby! Tweak the 3D stick slightly and your car's wheels shift a little. Yank on that control and your tires twist at insane angles, causing your vehicle to wrench to the side. Instantly intuitive,

the actual play mechanics impressed me the most. Want to live a little more dangerously? Then try hand-braking around every corner. Accelerate and Brake together locks the back wheels, enabling some rather hairy skidding to be attempted (I must stress the word 'attempt' here), but once you've mastered the handling, you'll realize what sort of freakish math-based geniuses Boss Studios must have to implement the car movements. Add to the package some real-time car deformation ("Welsh



out for that rock!" KRUNCH!) and some really wicked jumps and you'll soon recognize what success Boss could achieve with this game.

Of course, all the physics in the world ain't gonna mean diddy squat if the tracks aren't up to scratch. Well, this is where I'm reserving judgment until the review. There's five tracks in total (Desert, Jungle, Coastline, Mountain and er, a secret one which we can't tell you about...), and for the most part, these are great. Cities, dirt tracks, secret routes and the very best undulating terrain combine. However, I was slightly worried by a couple of factors. Firstly, there's the sheer length of the courses... they're massive! So what's the problem? Well, with such an immense set of courses (one lap takes well over two minutes of professional driving), I found myself a little 'out on my own.'

"Where's the other cars? I'm sure I passed one a couple of minutes ago..." Unfortunately, there's some really ugly and blurred 2D 'screens' of trees as well (think *Mario Kart 64*), and I also had problems

with the track texture-maps; they're repeated much too often, leading to an unrealistic look on many rock, hedge and wall textures. But hey, that's the limitations of the cartridge format for you...

Despite these flaws, I'm sure you'll recognize that this game looks hot!!

Aside from texture-map problems and some pretty horrendous music and sound-effects (perhaps Nintendo should have rethought that lack of sound chip in their hardware), this had me hooked for my entire afternoon. We also desperately encourage Boss Studios to include a load of the really cool debug features we saw in the final version (things like 'z-buffering only' mode, chrome cars, that sort of thing) via a 'Turbo-style' code system. And while you're at it, how about an ultra-cheesy announcer singing "Game Over... Yeahhh!!"? That would, as they say, rule. However, whatever the

case, Boss Studios seem to have excelled in the area of quality racing, and *Top Gear Rally* should storm the game-starved N64 market come September. Look out Namco... C18



Extreme G

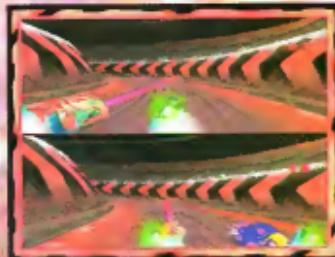


With the futuristic video game racing craze still in full effect, we knew it wouldn't be long before the Nintendo 64 jumped on the bandwagon and a 64-bit hyper-sled journey began. Along came Acclaim's *Probe* (those *Die-Hard* gents from Croydon, England) to fill the gap with the astonishing *Extreme G*. I write 'astonishing' for a number of reasons, the main one being the similarity between this and *WipeOut*. It's as if those Brits wandered up to Liverpool and kidnapped the Psygnosis crew for a couple of months; *Extreme G* isn't just a subtle nod towards a PlayStation classic, but a shockingly similar mimic, from the Designer's Republic-influenced decals to the roadway environments, weapons and... er... everything else.

However, to avoid courtroom-tastic confrontations, some attempt has been made to differentiate the two games. For a start, you ride on bikes instead of sleds, the tracks are much more impressive... and, erm... that's it. The cycles of *Extreme G* weave and bob about the tracks with eye-popping realism, and so they should; they're very impressively animated, swaying

and bobbing just like those bikes in *Tron*. But the real stars of the show have to be the tracks themselves. Now I'm prone to a spot of raceway fever as much as the next lunatic, but the rollercoaster ride present in *Extreme G* had me reaching for my bar bag quicker than a Kenny G sax solo. The courses literally drop straight down into a vertical plummets, and then wrench you back upwards with an incredible sensation of speed. You'll be frantically lurching from one side of the raceway to the other in a desperate attempt to thwart that maniac behind you, and then the track mutates into a twisting corkscrew and you'll be zipping back upside down with the previous track underneath you! Motion sickness? Yes please!

The fun doesn't end there either! Up to four players can wrestle for control of their bikes, and Probe has assured us that no detail or loss of speed will occur (mind you, that's what was said about *Mario Kart 64*). Add to this some... interesting music (classical, jazz and techno) and you (hopefully) have a sure-fire contender for fastest racer ever. Now if only that damn-mit wasn't so intrusive... **CH**



P
REVIEW



DEVELOPER - Probe

PUBLISHER - Acclaim

FORMAT - CARTRIDGE

NO OF PLAYERS - 4

DIFFICULTY - M/L

AVAILABLE - NOVEMBER '97



CHIEF HAMBLETON
Baaaa... mist again!

A NINTENDO 64!



COMPLETE THE SURVEY BELOW AND YOU COULD WIN A NINTENDO 64!

We need to know who you are and what you're playing so we can better serve your specific needs. We'll enter each entry in a drawing and give away a Nintendo 64 with Super Mario 64 to the lucky winner. The winner's name will be published in a future issue of GameFan.

Xerox copies are of course welcome (to save the page).

Your Name _____ Age _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Male _____ Female _____

1. Which system(s) do you currently own?

Nintendo 64 _____ Saturn _____
PlayStation _____ Super NES _____
Genesis _____ GameBoy _____
GameGear _____ Other _____

2. Do you have regular access to a personal computer?

Yes _____ No _____

3. Approximately how many hours a week do you play?

Home Video Games _____
Arcade Video Games _____
Computer (PC) Games _____

4. Have you ever visited a video gaming website?

Yes _____ No _____

5. Have you ever visited www.gametan.com?

Yes _____ No _____

6. How many games do you buy per year?

Video Games _____ Computer Games _____

7. How many games do you rent per year?

Video Games _____ Computer Games _____

8. Approximately how much do you spend on electronic entertainment each year? \$ _____

9. What are your favorite types of games?

(10=favorite, 1=least favorite)

Action _____ Action/RPG _____ Adventure _____ Driving _____
Fighting _____ Platform _____ Puzzle _____ Simulation _____
Sports _____ Strategy _____ RPG _____

10. Where do you buy most of your games?

Dept. Store _____ E. Boutique _____ Babbages _____
Software Etc. _____ Toys R Us _____ Sears _____
Toy Store _____ Mail Order _____ Other _____

11. Where do you buy most of your magazines?

Software Store _____ Grocery/Drug Store _____
Book Store _____ Mini Mart _____
Newsstand _____ Subscription _____
Other _____

12. How much time do you spend with each issue? _____ Hrs.

13. How many times per month do you refer to the issue? _____

14. Do you plan to buy the next issue? Yes _____ No _____

15. How many people look at your issue? No. _____

16. Which other video game publications do you read?

Name: _____

17. My household income: (check closest answer/optional)

\$20,000-\$30,000 _____ \$30,000-\$50,000 _____
\$50,000-\$70,000 _____ \$70,000-over _____

18. What other activities do you enjoy?

Music _____ Sports _____
Movies _____ Internet _____
Other _____

Send completed Survey to: Reader Survey 5137 Clayton Drive, Suite 210, Agoura Hills, CA 91301 all entries must be received by August 31, 1997. For a complete list of rules and details send self addressed envelope to the address above. Void where prohibited by law.

saturn

playstation

vs.

RESIDENT

V

SURVIVAL HORROR COMES TO SATURN...

Resident Evil for PlayStation owners, the mere mention of it sparks images of perfect, gory, gory games, hardcore story and excellent action. For Saturn owners, the name is Summer. Come on, Sephiroth, let's play! Of the highest action-games-to-story ratio the Saturn enjoys, you want Resident Evil. You can have it. You've waited that long, that

feeling of never knowing what's around the next corner... you've craved that skilled B-movie acting... you've banged to smash zombie heads like so many overripe melons. And now, thanks to the might that is Capcom, you will. Or you will as soon as Summer.

In case you've... um... you've been living in a hole for the last year (you live here to live Nick Ross' writing!), the story of Resident Evil is

this: It's July 1998. A series of bizarre murders have been occurring in the Arday mountains that surround little Raccoon City. The victims, to borrow Chris' dialogue from the intro, were apparently eaten. Raccoon's own S.T.A.R.S. (Special Tactics And Rescue Squad) Team has traced the perpetrators to a seemingly abandoned mansion high in the mountains, and flew both their Alpha and Bravo teams in to investigate. When Bravo Team's helicopter crashes and the pilot of Alpha Team's goes away, however, the members of S.T.A.R.S. are left to fend for themselves against legions of zombified dogs.

Apparently, only four members (who change depending on which character you choose: Chris or Jill) make it to the mansion alive, and



キーピンズを買った





ZOMBIES! DOGS! SHARKS! BEASTS! RECKONIZE!!

It is here where the true nightmare begins.

Resident Evil's gameplay is all about survival: Sure, the engine and puzzle elements were borrowed from the Alone in the Dark series, but those games didn't have you constantly checking to see how many bullets you have remaining or watching your supplies like a hawk. In RE, you're really screwed if you waste bullets or supplies early on. You can get into situations where there's literally no way to win, unless you break out madman skills and use only your knife and never get hit. However, most of us aren't madmen. It's this type of bleeding-edge gameplay (you can make mistakes, especially if you're playing Chris) coupled with the luscious graphics that make Resident Evil so memorable.

Alas, the graphics. No, they're not as good as the PlayStation version. Why? The skies aren't blue, hear? Er...uh... sorry. Blood streaks. But seriously, they aren't as good. No gouraud shading, lighting, or transparencies really take their toll. Hopefully, this next of the Saturn version will be improved on.

We'll have a review of Resident Evil+ Saturn soon... let's hope the rumors of new, Saturn-exclusive features prove to be true! —NR

saturn

playstation

**MUCH
MORE
REVIEW
COMING
SOON!!**



Playstation



PREVIEW

SEGA SATURN

REVIEWER - CAPCOM	6 OF PLAYERS - 1
ZOMBIES CAPCOM	DIFFICULTY - CHALLENGING
SHARKS CAPCOM	AVAILABLE - 200 DIAMONTS



HERC'S ADVENTURES

Everyone has their own wish list of 8/16-bit games they'd love to see get a next-gen makeover. Personally, I would donate Amis to see 32-bit versions of *Phantasy Star*, *Metroid*, *Bare Knuckle*, a 2D *Contra*, a real *Shinobi*, *Guns of the Hero*, *Rolling Thunder* and nearly all of Capcom's coin-ops, circa 1990. But hey, a 32-bit *Zombie's Ate My Neighbors* is a start...

That's right: *Herc's Adventure* is *ZAMN* in all but name only. It's by the same team, it has the same control and item system, the same gameplay, the same wacky sense of humor—it even has some of the same enemies (those Marbans sure get around). Of course, that's not necessarily a bad thing. *ZAMN* was a great game, and *Herc's Adventure* retains all the twisted sensibilities that made *ZAMN* so much fun. Unfortunately, it also retains the look and feel of a 16-bit game. Now, personally, I don't have a problem with that, but if you're the kind of gamer who lives for fancy graphics, then *Herc's Adventure* isn't exactly going to blow your skirt up.

To be fair, *Herc's Adventure* is more like a *ZAMN* RPG than a straight sequel. Instead of *ZAMN*'s linear level structure, LucasArts have opted for one single giant world map (Ancient Greece), which never loads. As you journey further into the game you are called upon to perform various sub-quests, battle bosses and occasionally travel back and forth between locations. Admittedly there's a lot more action than a traditional RPG, but you still have to talk to NPCs, find keys, solve puzzles and build up your character's attributes. I don't know if I'd call it an RPG, but it's definitely got RPG trimmings.

For the record, I really enjoyed *Herc's Adventure*, and if you liked *ZAMN* or *Ghoul Patrol*, I think you will too. The pace may be a tad slow at times, and some of the enemies may be a little cheap (read: annoying), but the characters are well animated, the music is excellent and game is overflowing with LucasArts' distinctive brand of humor. It's not what I was hoping for in a 32-bit *ZAMN*, but seeing as the chances of that game getting a true 32-bit sequel are so slim, I better be thankful for what I've got. K

R REVIEW



AVAILABILITY

PRICE: \$49.99

GENRE: RPG

DEVELOPER: LucasArts

PUBLISHER: LucasArts

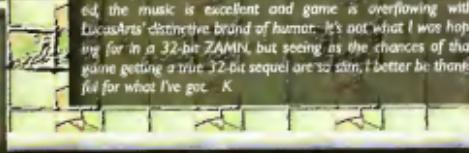
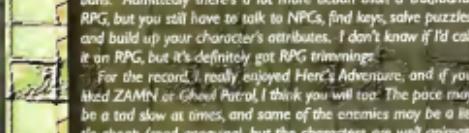
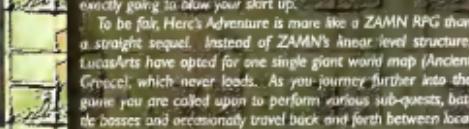
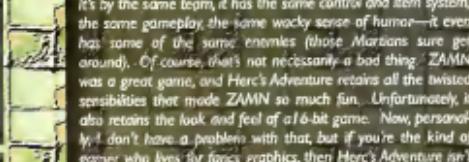
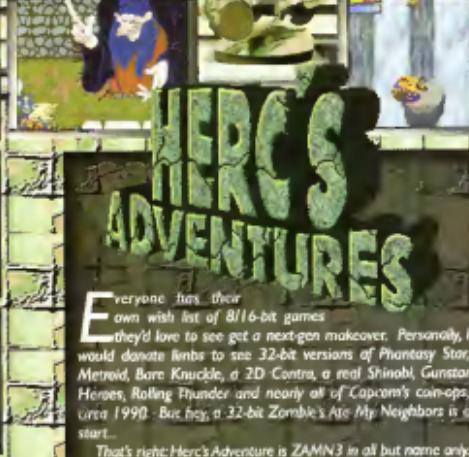
RELEASE DATE: 1997

SYSTEM: SEGA SATURN

REVIEWER: Matt S. Smith



KNIGHTMARE
Zombies Ate My Neighbors - The RPG!





For anyone who's missed one of our numerous previews, *The Lost World* is a 2.5D action/platformer with the hook being the ability to play as a number of prehistoric beasts, from T-Rex to Compy. You are even allowed to play as humans, such as paleontologist Sarah Harding, though her polygonal model is nowhere near as cute as Julianne Moore.

Saturn Lost World has a planned release date later than that of its PS cousin, a fact that is evident by the early nature of this version. The camera system



has yet to be fully implemented, many levels are incomplete, and the temp MIDI soundtrack is still in place. I am happy to report that the dinos already animate as smoothly as their PS counterparts and feature a smoother, more shaded appearance to boot. The texture quality is of lower resolution, but that really comes as no surprise con-

sidering how PS to Saturn conversions usually go.

Appaloosa's *Saturn Contra: LOW* actually ran a hair faster than the PS one, so I doubt they'll have any trouble making a great Saturn version of *Lost World*. What remains to be seen is how good of a game it actually turns out to be in the end. As with all things, only time will tell, and GameFan will be there. **SD**



P
PREVIEW

SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - APPALOOSA/LOW

PUBLISHER - SEGA/DEAMWORKS

FORMAT - CD

1-2 PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - N/A

AVAILABLE - SEPTEMBER '97



SUBSTANCE D
Boy, it's risky making a *Lost World* game. Seriously, who saw that movie?



Shining characters must find the Ark to complete their quest for the Holy Ark.



The Shining series proudly lives on in the US! Shining the Holy Ark is the seventh Shining game to make it to these shores, joining Shining Force I, II, CD, Sword of Hojo, Shining Wisdom, and of course (drum roll...) Shining in the Darkness, Holy Ark's natural predecessor. That's almost every game in the series! In the US! The folks responsible for this year's Shining installment are Sonic



Software Planning, one of SOJ's most respected in-house developers and the design team behind Shining Force 2, SFCD, and last year's Shining Wisdom. With Shining the Holy Ark, they've once again saved the day and quenched the thirst of RPG starved Saturn gamers in the US.

One look at SHA and real fans will recognize the tell-tale signs of a Shining game. Whether it's the text boxes, the



italic lettering, or the menu system (complete with cute animating icons), if you've played a Shining game, you've been here before. It's a perfect menu system! You'll navigate through battle, magic, and character stats with ease, and every item is represented by a detailed image which scales in and out when selected. Sonic is to be commended for staying true to their roots.



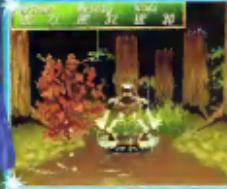
RENDERED POWER!

The first time I saw the characters in motion I was a little shocked. "Rendered?" I said. "No, it can't be!" This is the pseudo-sequel to *Shining in the Darkness*, one of the greatest 16-bit games ever, the proud bearer of gorgeous hand-drawn characters... and you give me renders?! Well (sigh...), I'm cool with that. Sonic did it right, as you can see. These five clips are directly from the game. Each looks and acts very much like their hand-drawn forefathers, and the animation quality is often shocking. So who am I to complain?



OK, enough Shining nostalgia, let's get into the game. I've amassed a stockpile of info and opinions, and it all starts with gameplay. First, the basic stuff. Shining the Holy Ark is a first-person RPG set in a fantasy realm. You move (via a beautiful overhead map) from point to point, whether it be a forest, dungeon, or town, and click to enter

the 3D environments. Once inside these first-person landscapes, you may bring up the menu windows, search, and take advantage of a couple of excellent features, the first of which is the required automapping screen. SHA is 100% first-person exploration, so an instant map (press Start, bingo) is very handy, especially when you're



six floors deep in a mammoth underground labyrinth. Next are the convenient Look buttons. Pressing X looks left and right, Y looks up and down, and Z centers, so environments can be viewed from all angles. I would've preferred full d-pad control over the Look camera, like a corridor game, but what's here works fine.

R
REVIEW



DEVELOPER - SONIC SOFTWARE PLANNING

PUBLISHER - SEGA

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - JULY



GLITCH
A rendered Shining game... and it's awesome.

LIVE BY THE SWORD...

Let your foes taste the fury of tempered steel! Swords, axes, staffs, and ninja blades are within your grasp, available at your local weaponsmith, or simply find some mithril ore and have special weapons custom built at the forge!

Shining in the Darkness, anyone? On the other hand, it might be YOU accepting a wicked claw, tentacle, or bite from one of *Holy Ark*'s countless forsaken creatures.

Oh, well, everyone's gotta go sometime...



...DIE BY THE SPELL!

Call upon sorcery to destroy the enemy! Spectacular spells are commonplace in today's 32-bit RPGs, and *SHA* competes with the best. Complementing the assortment of fire

storms, ice showers, and ninja magic are the elemental spells. Once cast, the screen fills with light and color as the element of choice rains its power down upon your foes! Great chunks of HP burn up in the wake of this awesome display!



CLASSIC FIRST-PERSON RPG FIGHTING, DECKED OUT IN A SEXY SET OF 32-BIT THREADS!



So what about the translation, graphics, and sound?

Well, SOA has done a competent, yet slightly mundane

English translation. Every character you play or meet offers a unique personality, despite the sometimes generic text that comes along with them. What's funny, though, is the minor censoring. For example: At the local pub there's a character that buys "milk" for her grandmother because "the milk helps her to sleep at night." Milk! Right. Another chap in the bar raises his head from the table and says, "Burp. Drank hat root beer too fast." Hic hie, must've been that new-fangled KA brand root beer. As far as the main graphics go, the polygonal engine handles large environments (like towns, forests, etc.) very nicely, with almost no trace of pop-up whatsoever. The frame rate is low—in the range of 15 to 20—but it's

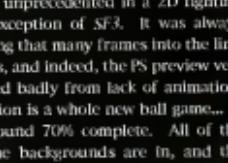
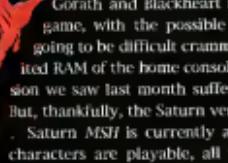
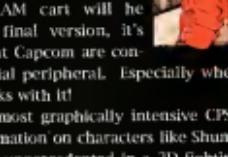
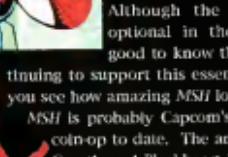
perfectly functional, and the sprite-based objects and effects (trees, shrubs, spells) are lush and vivid, thanks to Sonic's unique artistic style. My only complaint? In busy environments—the 3D engine is often stretched to its limits, and the resulting slow-down can be a little distracting, bogging down the menu windows and Look functions. And finally, a word about the music: Excellent. Great battle tunes and fantastic exploration tunes, perfectly suited to each area. I'll probably get the soundtrack.

There's still much more to talk about, but I'll leave the rest up to you. *Shining in the Darkness* fans NEED, and a game that every RPG player should consider an essential purchase. G

PIXIE MAGIC!

Send these little magical beings into the fray! Be sure to search every corner of the world for Pixies who appear and join your party. There are dozens of Pixies, Fairies, Succubus, Incubus, and powerful Leprechauns. The more you find, the stronger each race of Pixie will get, so keep an eye out! They might just turn the tide in your favor!





P REVIEW



DEVELOPER: CAPCOM
PUBLISHER: CAPCOM
FORMAT: CPS2
RELEASE DATE: 1998
PRICE: \$49.99
RATING: T



KNIGHTMARE
Showing up to be
'Marvel'ous!

The first thing you need to know about *Saturn MSH* is that it uses the SNK RAM cartridge. In fact, this preview beta wouldn't run without it! Although the RAM cart will be optional in the final version, it's good to know that Capcom are continuing to support this essential peripheral. Especially when you see how amazing *MSH* looks with it!

MSH is probably Capcom's most graphically intensive CPS2 coin-op to date. The animation on characters like Shuma Gorath and Blackheart is unprecedented in a 2D fighting game, with the possible exception of *SF3*. It was always going to be difficult cramming that many frames into the limited RAM of the home consoles, and indeed, the PS preview version we saw last month suffered badly from lack of animation. But, thankfully, the Saturn version is a whole new ball game...

Saturn MSH is currently around 70% complete. All of the characters are playable, all the backgrounds are in, and the Infinity Gem system is working. There's no CPU AI at present, and the game runs pretty slowly (slower than the PS version) but both these flaws should be remedied by the time the game ships.

What is apparent from this version, however, are the quality of the graphics. Even the splendor of *Cyberbots* could not prepare me for the 2D explosion that is *MSH*—the animation is truly shocking. Admittedly it's not arcade perfect, but it's pretty damn close. The frame loss is no where near as bad as *X-Men: COTA*, and you'd have to have the two versions running side by side to notice any major differences. Of course, that's with the RAM cart. Sega still doesn't have any plans to release it over here (although Capcom says they've asked), and we've yet to see how *MSH* looks without it. Rest assured, we'll keep you posted. **K**



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GAMEFAN

SPORTS



JOE KIDD

KIDD'S CORNER

Who exactly are the ones that are playing Madden and Shootout across this great nation of ours? I mean, these guys (and gals) comprise at least 80% of video game sales each year, so they're spending some serious bucks, cuz these games as you know aren't cheap! Did you know that a football game, primarily Madden of course, has dominated the PlayStation game sales for both years of the Sony PlayStation's existence? Keep in mind that Sony did over \$1 billion in PlayStation sales in less than a year—even more amazing is that those figures were calculated even before the Holiday season! Who's buying these games? Let's see, I gotta assume that college-minded, and college-aged males are the biggest percentage of these consumers, followed by the yippies with the PEs, then I guess we'd have to go back down to the high school ranks, followed by the numbers of professional athletes that game it up on the road, then maybe all the mothers that buy them for their kids, because sports are a healthy alternative to having their little ones get broken on the football field. What do all of these groups have in common that would clump them all this category though, because it is quite a vast array... Of course, you have to take into consideration that all of these groups just fist out love sports; the camaraderie, the challenge, the competition, the rivalries, the

traditions, the stats, the players, the cheerleaders, the mascots, the uniforms, the arenas, the excitement, the interaction, and you know what else? Sporting events are social. That's one of the best things about sports—you don't go at it alone, whether in the stands or part of the team, or just you and the coach. We're talking friendships bonded through wind-sprints, deals done on the 9th hole, field trips to the Yankee game, girlfriends met at Super Bowl parties, family reunion picnics with the traditional football game, playin' hoops with Dad over the garage, or bowling with your buddies on Tuesday and playing co-ed softball on Thursday nights. We even give scholarships to athletes who happen to excel at their, that's right, their Sport!

So what does this all have to do with sports video games? All I can figure is that we're just such a doggone sports-oriented society; these cultural events and icons are something we want to re-live over and over again, and in every form imaginable. We love the fact that we can play these games with seven other sports nutz simultaneously, and that Rodman has different color hair in each game. It's just plain simple. Sports are social and they're cool, too. Yeah, we like our occasional RPG or a fighter here and there, but man I gotta get out in the sunshine, too! Don't keep me in the dark too long playing SF or Res Evil, I don't like closing my eyes and seeing the dungeon walls of the RPG I've been playing for the last 23 hours... (when will that music ever stop!) I'll take a good hoops game any day of the week.

Joe Kidd can be reached for questions or comments at:
zoo@metropolismedia.com

"JOE"

VIEWPOINTS

"STRAP"

Soccer was never as cool until this title came along. The last time I thought I had seen a winner, was playing FWA for the N64, it was to me the best soccer game to date. 2 years later I see the new version, and it's even better. The new character has landed atop of the mountain, and that game is 168 Soccer by Konami. Play it once and you'll know why this is a must have. The controls are excellent, and it's everywhere. Take advantage of the Practice Mode, because there will be plenty of owners trying for the Cup.



INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR SOCCER
KONAMI
SONY PLAYSTATION

G C P M O 95
0 0 10 0 0

Let me set the 64-bit record straight: 168 positively destroys FWA in every conceivable way, from top to bottom. The graphics are slightly superior, the sound is better, and the cast/master controls absolutely take a crap on FWA's stiff, lame excuse for graphics. Am I being too harsh? Kirk, it's been an off year for FWA, even on the N64, and people only buy one soccer game...no make it this one, please.

G C P M O 97
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Remember that great racing game by Peynopsis last year? That one that sold over a million copies worldwide? Well the new season is here and we're all set to step into the newest saga of Peynopsis Formula 1 series, 1997 edition. Bizarre Creations developed this title and has tried to give racing fans the ultimate in racing realism and excitement, which brings about a unique balance of arcade action. F1 includes all of the drivers from the 1997 season, has 17 circuits, new authentic tracks like Silverstone (UK), Monaco (Monte Carlo), and Adelaide (Australia). This international tour will send chilling sensations up your spine like the race car drivers feel in the cockpit and on the track. You'll be able to select from a variety of viewpoints as well as weather conditions, manual or automatic transmission. Take advantage of all of the high impact sound effects with a Dolby Surround Sound option, while being guided by veteran race commentators, Murray Walker and John Watson. Get ready for some rubber bending AI, and precision play control with this 1997 3rd quarter release.



Just as Green Bay snuck up on Dallas and San Fran, so has GameDay moved in on Madden. The response for GameDay was overwhelmingly positive, and the anticipation for GameDay '98 has been large ever since, and has even sustained the #1 position of best selling title on the PlayStation. GD '98 will be a true 3D, fully polygonal football game, in fact everything in the game is polygonal; new stadiums, sideline crews, coaches, camera men and the players too. Last year's GD really captured football fans everywhere because of the realism of its advanced AI, more realistic than any other football site (including Madden), and defensive stunts never done before. Now with the addition of fully polygonal graphics, the combination should be lethal; assuming nothing in gameplay has been lost.

All 30 NFL teams and over 1800 real players are available. All of the team and player attributes will reflect their real life "counterparts." A new mode that's finding more and more popularity in football games, is the Draft Mode. In GD '98's version you'll get a shot at drafting from the top 6 players from each NFL team, in the traditional NFL draft style. Over 500 plays in your playbook, an infinite number of camera angles, and category upon category of statistical tracking. Sony's going long with this September release.



Rising fever is upon us, and Sony has jumped on the bandwagon. CART (Championship Auto Racing Teams), also known as Indy Car Racing, introduces teams like Penske, Team Rahal and Newman/Haas to PlayStation users, both the teams and their drivers, like Patti Tracy, Al Unser Jr. and Michael Andretti, 20 teams and sponsors in all. The CART circuit consists of 17 exciting races, the point standing of which are posted at the conclusion of each race. You'll be able to choose from about a dozen tracks that are second to the actual courses, like Homestead, Long Beach, Phoenix, and others. CART WSC will let sure 4 perspectives to race by: Road Cart, In Car Cam, First Person Removed and Helicopter View. In addition, you'll have 4 modes of play in: New Season, Contests, Season, Single Race and Practice.

An emphasis has been put on physics and collision, as your cars are capable of being rolled, flipped and crushed. In event that you get "moved" around on the track, every part on your car can be independently damaged or removed. Modify your car in fuel, weight distribution, tire pressure, and hardness, camber adjustment, front and rear line as well as gear noise... bust out the wrench! Beware of the slick surfaces caused by rain, they say the first 50 minutes of rain are the most dangerous... just went to Traffic School... Take advantage of stat tracking over the season for mileage and best lap times, previous record and lap times.

Well, it will be available in the Fall, so we'll tackle the most important aspects in the next issue: gameplay and control.



It seems the majority of Sony sports games have the book on creating games with realistic AI and combining that with terrific gameplay. You'll be happy to know that they aren't satisfied, but are making massive improvements on top of their already popular games. NHL FaceOff '98 has increased its popularity by focusing on elements of the game, things like team strategy and gameplay, i.e. icon passing. The new direction NHL '98 is taking will not only enhance the existing, successful qualities of the game, but will make a huge stab at perfecting the graphics via polygonal players and atmosphere. The challenge will come not only in making these polygonal players smooth to the eye, but also smooth to the touch.

All 26 NHL teams will be included, as well as all the players that comprise the teams. Sony has adopted the EA-ism of sports by doing everything real, real teams, strategies, players, attributes, arenas and sounds. New sound effects with new organ tunes, skating sounds, cheering animations and lighting upgrades too. Keep all of your own individual user stats, and keep an eye on all of the league leaders throughout the season. Mike Carlucci, the Mighty Ducks' PA guy, will only add to the game's authenticity. You can play up to 8 players, and with the way hockey fanaticism is spreading, that should be very accommodating. NHL '98 offers Exhibition, Practice, Season Mode or shoot straight for the Stanley Cup Playoffs. Strategy and AI is still at a premiere level, enabling you to select trapping or checking defenses, break out modes, fore-checking and more.



COOL BOARDERS 2

You always want to hope that a sequel will be an improvement over the first edition. Cool Boarders 2 will have a bit of a challenge, as CB jumped to the top with its attempt at capturing the snowboarding experience. The main objective of UEP, CB2's development team, was to add the competitive edge. After all, what's a sports game if you can't beat somebody into the ground?

You'll have 10 different snowboarders to choose from, each with a different set of attributes and ratings. In addition, you'll have over 12 different boards to choose from, and if you're feeling a little creative... design your own cool-dude board. It looks like selection will not be a problem, as you'll even have 16 all new downhill courses to risk your neck on, and if that's not enough you'll be introduced to the new Half Pipe and Slalom courses. Graphics are constructed via a full 3D Gaming Engine that produces polygonal characters and tracks, in a 2D perspective. All of your best moves will be captured accurately, which is a good thing since 40 new maneuvers have been added, moves like "Calabrian Twists" and "720 Indy Nosebones." The final aspect that should really put it all together is the sound track, a medley of 8 different, skull reverberating tracks. Look for this title in November.



GFU

EA BUSTS OPEN THE TAILGATE PARTY!



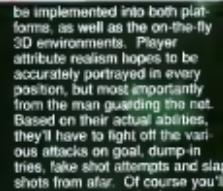
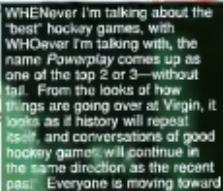
NCAA FOOTBALL '98

What red blooded American can say they can't get into the spirit of college football? Oh, the tailgate parties, the marching bands, the Rose Parades, the Orange Bowls, and the Christmas trees... well, we can all do without the Christmas trees. For those of you that can identify with me (of course that means anyone with any common sense and an ability to appreciate the very essence of collegiate life), you have a game in NCAA Football '98 that will spring up country-wide rivalries right in your very own living room, or dorm room for that matter. EA has gotten together with Coach Terry Donahue, and has written up a script worthy of the NCAA Football name itself. 20 great bowl match-ups, with exclusives on the Rose Bowl, Orange Bowl, Sugar and Fiesta. Scout next week's match-up and learn about the opponent's key plays and players. Keep an eye on the CNN/USA Today Coach's Poll of the Top 25 teams in the nation as your team climbs to the top, or merely gets honorable mention. Whether your team's the Fighting Irish, the Canes of Miami, or yes, the mighty Golden Bears of California, your playbook will resemble the actual team's in real life. For better or worse in some cases, for all of you armchair coaches and ADs, take the experience one step further as you go out and recruit your players. For next year in hopes of creating a dynasty over the next few seasons. We don't want to forget all of the NFL-bound seniors, so they will have an opportunity to showcase their talents in the East/West Shrine game in Palo Alto. Wherever your colors lie, you'll get a shot at 'em, so pull up those knee highs and get ready for next month's edition.



NHL POWERPLAY '98

... always looking for the upper hand



And now for...



WHENever I'm talking about the "best" hockey games, with WHOever I'm talking with, the name Powerplay comes up as one of the top 2 or 3—without fail. From the looks of how things are going over at Virgin, it looks as if history will repeat itself, and conversations of good hockey games will continue in the same direction as the recent past. Everyone is moving toward motion captured 3D animated players, and Virgin will not be left behind. These 3D characters will

be implemented into both platforms, as well as the on-the-fly 3D environments. Player attribute realism hopes to be accurately portrayed in every position, but most importantly from the man guarding the net. Based on their actual abilities, they'll have to fight off the various attacks on goal, dump-ins, fake shot attempts and slap shots from afar. Of course you'll have the now-standard-among-sports-games: stat-tracking, create, and trade players.

... a little motion capture!



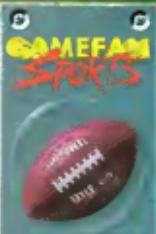
NFL QUARTERBACK CLUB 98

The kind of anticipation I've placed on *Quarterback Club 98* has been like eagerly awaiting this summer's blockbuster movie. However, if you're like me, you usually walk out of the theater with a stiff back feeling a bit let down. So I approach these cases with guarded optimism, but never before has a football game been made for the Nintendo 64... Can you imagine using a polygonal engine with motion-captured animations to recreate the glories of the gridiron? Well, I finally had a glimpse as to what all the hype was about, a preview into this summer's N64 blockbuster by Acclaim.

Whatever your opinions are of *QBC '97* for the PlayStation, will have to be cleansed from your palate, because *QBC '98* is all about 64. Knowing the complexities of the N64 and the 3D rendering process, they couldn't keep the game exactly the same as the PlayStation version, and just make everything 3D. Instead, they realized it had to be dug up from the root and re-developed accordingly. What you will find are some of the most definitive graphics and control you've ever had in any sports game; much of this due, in part to N64's anti-aliasing and real-time rendering process.

Don't forget that you'll be using the analog stick for this sports title, something we'll all have to get used to as sports fans. Somehow the analog seems to make it more of a fitness game, as you move away from the familiar D-pad, where pressing the cross harder makes you actually believe you'll go faster. Well, if you can't separate yourself from "Sega Thumb," you can still resort to the friendly D-pad confines. Another "feature," courtesy of the analog action, are 14 different buttons, and yes, they are all assigned a function. Well, I guess if Brett Favre has to memorize over 1000 plays, 14 buttons isn't too bad. To ease the mayhem of it all, *QBC '98* throws in a nice touch by having the bell-snap and passing windows come from the trigger underneath, so you don't have to confuse them with any of the other 13 options you've got running.

Here's the low down. All 3D NFL teams alongside 30 3D rendered stadiums, and over 1500 real players. Exclusive in-game profiles and game tips from the actual *Quarterback Club QB's*. You get complete roster moves like trading, creating players, creating new teams, fantasy GM-style drafting, signing and releasing. Play Script option lets you march down the field on your opening drive, by pre-determining and pre-programming your first set of plays. Bring in a little stat-tracking in some 9 categories, a little in-game player highlights, a couple color photos and NFL film footage, and a little stat-update action, and BAM! You got a football game.... sorry, a little too much essence. We'll stick this baby in the oven for a review in our next issue. JK



PREVIEW

NINTENDO 64



DEVELOPER - IQUANA

PUBLISHER - ACCLAIM

FORMAT - CD

US PLAYERS - 1-4

RELEASE - AVAILABLE

PRICE - \$59.99

JOE KIDD



Brown this one a little more to let all the flavors come out...





I've been feeling guilty for some time now, because we at GameFan sometimes get these great sports games, games I just can't say enough about. I tell you about how they are the best in existence, how much you would love them, and all the great new features but the only problem is that they never leave the foreign soils in which they are created—just a tease from overseas! You can certainly see why I'm so ridden with guilt.

Finally, I am redeemed! Konami has released their highly coveted International Superstar Soccer 64, for you, the neglected masses. If you read my review on the game previously known as J-League Soccer, you know how enamored I was with the game; a game certainly worthy rejoicing. To my satisfaction, English everywhere! I could now read the options, the camera angles, the strategies, and modes. Can you say stat? Several different clear charts of settings and figures to enable ideal play setting, as well as Create Player and Trades.

Choose from Exhibition, World League, International Cup, Shoot-Out, Scenario, or even Training modes. For those of you that are unfamiliar with the Scenario mode, it basically consists of placing you into game breaking situations, where your every move will determine the fate of the game. We all know it's the "playmakers" that make the big bucks—is that you? The Practice mode is something that has been prevalent in Japanese sports games for some time, and is starting to appear more and more in "non-Japanese" sports games as well. Undergo the rigors of perfecting your goal kick... kick, after kick, after kick... Larry Bird shot 300 free throws a day after practice... As you can see ISS 64 offers one of the most comprehensive list of modes provided by any soccer game, complemented by an equally balanced arsenal of options, strategies, offensive attacks, and defensive controls. For instance, on offense, you have 20 different options you can choose from; from Search



INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR SOCCER '94

Passes and

Points (dummy kicks) to Quick

Turns and Step-Overs. The multi-faceted N64 analog pad equips you with an array of attacks that outdoes the Italian and Brazilian International teams combined!

Get ready for some of the best control and gameplay to be found in any sports game. Yes, you do have to familiarize yourself with the analog stick, that is if you haven't already. I found the maneuverability of the stick to be particularly useful in soccer, since you're constantly making back cuts, side passes, etc. One of the nice things about the game is that even if you don't know too much about soccer, you can still get by with using only a couple buttons, but for the true strategist, you'll love the ability to manipulate all the different functions.

As in any sport, defense wins the game. You have 5 different control options as the user: Charging, Shoulder Changing, Sliding, Dash or Body Contact. Some of these may result in fouls, but if you come in at the right angle, you might get away with one. The goalkeeper can be switched onto Automatic or Semi-Automatic control. Included in the goalie's actions are: Saving, Movement after the Catch, Dropping the Ball, Punt Kick, Goal Kick, Overhand Throw, and Underhand Throw. Unlike other soccer games, which have many, yet indistinguishable moves, ISS 64's moves and controls are each extremely identifiable, and take place on command. The combination of total control gameplay, complete selection of options and strategic attacks, as well as realistic graphics and sound, make this game a true soccer experience.

JK

ARE
YOU A
PLAYMAKER?



JOE KIDD
WARNING!
May cause foot
injury.

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NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD!**



NHL BREAKAWAY '98



You know, I still don't understand that whole octopus chucking thing, but I'm certainly glad the National Sushi Federation stood up to the squid tossers, and put an end to it all... complete blasphemy if you ask me, wasting all them good eats. One thing I do understand though is some serious video hockey. NHL Breakaway '98 could be the game we've all been waiting for, one that appeals across the board, from the fight-freaks to the puck purists, this title looks like it has a little of everything.

Tangent: Why is it that many of the poorer sports games have a better skating feel than a lot of hockey games? Isn't that weird? I mean you can't get your basketball player to run, he just slides around the court, while some of these hockey games you'd think you were doing the triple jump with all the choppiness... hmrmrmrm.

Anyway, Breakaway '98 is not one of those games... bad ones that is. This hi-res sim has down-to-the-detail playbook-based AI, which not only reacts to (the user's) actions, but also sets up real plays from the actual teams. Acclaim boasts that the polygonal 3D graphics are so clean and sharp you can read the players' numbers on their sleeves! Not only that, but they also had their own state-of-the-art motion capturing studio built, producing the highest quality animations on the market.

The true hockey enthusiast will be breathless with all of the new features. The momentum-based checking system calculates each player's weight and velocity, thus hurling them into proportionately measured body slams. And since there are variable player sizes (displayed graphically as well), the depicted checking animations are fierce. Ever try Icon Passing? Well if you haven't you will soon. It's the latest in on-the-fly passing, and it's never been used in a hockey game until now. What you'll find is pin-point passes, and a better ability to manipulate the break-away. As the season progresses, and your players and coaches get more experience, the Total Team Management feature will allow you to accumulate points and improve, ala RPGs. Ever wish you could see the player's name on his jersey after you've created him? Got it. Want to control teammates even if they aren't controlling the puck? Got it. You go Acclaim, win one back for the good ole NSF. JK



DEVELOPER - ACCLAIM

OF PLAYERS - 1-8

PUBLISHER - ACCLAIM

DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

FORMAT - CD

AVAILABLE - AUGUST



JOE KIDD
Fighting Rules?
Ged.

The brightest star in the Sega Sports line-up has always been its *World Series Baseball*. From the inaugural days on the Genesis to its emergence on the Saturn, *WSB* has challenged as the best baseball game on the market, time and time again. Recently, however, Sega Sports has fallen into a slumber, putting out little of quality, as well as quantity. Perish the thought of it having an affect on the king of Saturn sports titles.

You can allay all fears that you may have, because Sega Sports is back—with a vengeance. Complete with a new and improved corporate strategy, Sega Sports positions itself to reassess its dominance in the Saturn sports realm. The title that will announce this

World Series BASEBALL '98



reemergence will be *World Series Baseball '98*.

Following suit to the competition, *WSB'98* will make the switch over from sprites to polygons. Some may cringe at such a thought, considering that the former, two versions looked beautiful, but the changeover was inevitable; it's evolution. While still too early to compliment or condemn the look of the polygon players, it is definite that *WSB'98* will suffer from the same awkwardness as all of the new, 3D titles; players look a tad unusual, and there are some problems with polygon break-up.

You can expect the same colorful and energetic commentary, as well as some lively crowd noise. Don't expect there to be too much deterioration in playability, either. *WSB* still features some of the best in the genre, with little difficulty arising from the introduction of the 3D motion capture.

There will be a smattering of new additions to this year's title, one of which is the inclusion of a batter/pitcher box. This box sits outside of the regular batter's box and displays the batter's strengths and weaknesses, i.e.: if he is a good low ball hitter, the two lower quadrants will highlight red; if he can't hit inside pitches, the inside quadrants will light blue. The box will also display the locations of where the pitcher has been throwing, alerting you to any patterns, as well as showing you which pitches have been hit. A very helpful item.

Overall, *WSB'98* looks as though it will remain the crown jewel of Sega Sports. The perfect blend of fast, arcade action and meat-and-potatoes simulation, *WSB'98* is sure to satisfy. **JS**



PREVIEW



The Guvnor presents...

EUROPA

Wotcha me old cockers, it's the Guvnor 'ere, innit? Back with another tea drinking, scone eating, soccer playing edition of everyone's favorite euro-gaming column: Europa!

NINTENDO STRUGGLES, SONY DOMINATES... ...AND SATURN GOES UNDER!

The recent launch of the N64 in the UK went well... but not as well as Nintendo would have liked. Even though the initial shipment of units sold out, subsequent shipments have been selling slowly, prompting a 40% price drop from £250 (\$400) to £150 (\$240) after only eight weeks. This was a measure that severely pissed off nearly all pre-existing N64 owners who bought the machine at full price! Crips!

On the other hand, Sony's PS price drop to £129 (\$200) insured that their machines' sales skyrocketed. After the drop the only way you could pick up a PS was to pre-order—there were no PlayStations on store shelves anywhere for well over a week!

Finally, Sega seems to be taking a turn for the worse, with sales of the Saturn reaching an all-time low. Really, if you were to see hardware and software sales figures for the Saturn in the UK, you'd cry. We're talking 1000s vs 100s for software and 100s vs 10s for hardware. Sega recently dropped the price of the Saturn from £179 (\$286) with two games to £99 (\$160) solo or £129 (\$200) with any game. Rumor has it that Sega of Japan did NOT instigate this move... In related news, Sega UK's #2 big cheese, European Marketing Director Andy Mee, was recently fired. Bummer.

NEW DMA TITLE REVEALED: SILICON VALLEY FOR N64

This N64 platform/strategy game has a simple visual style similar to *Mario 64*, though the gameplay is completely different. The scene is aboard space station 'Silicon Valley', and you control a variety of Nanobots to solve the mystery of Silicon Valley's 1000 year disappearance. A Nanobot is defined by DMA as a cyborg animal, very similar to those found on Earth—with a few custom extras: Foxes have optional rocket propulsion, dogs may switch between paws or wheels, and so on. Nanobots need to be 'possessed' by a micro chip before falling under your command, and can only be 'entered' if they are close to exhaustion. The idea is to switch between N-bots in order to accomplish specific tasks in areas of Silicon Valley. Each time you do, a snippet of Silicon Valley history is revealed. Weird and fun (hopefully). Not due out for ages (it's about 40% complete) but looking good.

TOMB RAIDER 2 UPDATE & BAD NEWS FOR SATURN OWNERS!

Despite the news that the Saturn version of *Tomb Raider 2* (originally specified to use the rumored V3 upgrade cartridge) has been canned, work continues on the PS and PC versions. The game engine for *TR2* is a modified version of the original, and everything is being handled by the same team (or what's left of them). Lara is being remodeled to be more curvaceous (she's, er, 'rounder' than before), and now sports a cool pony tail. While we're on the subject, a new gameplay feature includes Lara's pony tail catching fire in a Michael Jackson-tastic manner! There's also a variety of costumes required for specific situations, such as scuba diving, mountain climbing, and so on. Lara has a couple of new abilities to help her reach awkward places: hand-over-hand climbing to scale walls, and crawling beneath ledges. Also expect to see cool vehicles in use for new types of terrain, such as a Skidoo on snow. Though combat is still long-range (no hand-to-hand combat) there are a couple of new weapons planned to add variety. The harpoon is the only one mentioned so far.

Cave aims to add more ambient atmosphere with new lighting techniques, a good example being the flares which Lara can either carry or throw to illuminate dark passageways. One idea under discussion is the possibility of night and day, which would add to the puzzle solving element. All new outdoor loca-

Strike a bleedin' light
and knock me down wiv
a fevver if I'm not back
with the toppermost info
from the UK and beyond!
Lawks a lordy!

tions would take advantage of this. It is also rumored that there may be more than one playable character (another explorer perhaps), which would indicate some form of multi-player mode—think of the possibilities! All in all, *TR2* looks destined to be more action packed and viscerally challenging than the original.

WIPEOUT XL SATURN

While developers like Core and Shiny continue to abandon the Saturn, it's nice to know that Paynopsis is continuing to support Sega's dark horse. Their latest is a conversion of the PS smash hit, *Wipeout XL*. We've seen the game moving and are happy to report that it's looking jolly tasty indeed. Using a modified *Monk TT* engine, the game runs at 30fps with little clipping and all the gameplay features that made the PS version so special. There are still no transparencies, but when the gameplay is 100%, who cares?!



WIPEOUT XL ON SATURN!



Right: Flippin' heck! Just look at those Wipeout XL shots! Not bad!



DISCOVER SUNKEN CITIES FILLED WITH HIDDEN TREASURES!



A strange rule... "Mother Earth was being devastated by the people it had created. In desperation she sent out to the sea who summoned the Great Sea God to punish mankind. The God called forth the waters of the World to submerge the land and now almost all of the great cities and civilizations lie in the darkest depths of the ocean. The sunken ruins are a dangerous and mysterious place."

"Whilst searching for these mysteries a brave adventurer vanishes without a trace beneath the sea. His son Chris vows to find him and sets forth on a journey to the sea bottom."

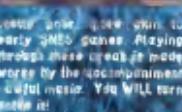
In order to search for him you must investigate the site of his disappearance using your submarine dive deep into the ocean to search for clues. In the sea there are many unusual artifacts and treasures, etc. You must retrieve these, exchange them for cash and then purchase items with which you can upgrade your submarine.

The game is an action/adventure with two distinct modes. Before you can explore the ocean you must prep your submarine, stocking up on essential components like torpedoes and power cells, and then talk to the locals for clues. Wandering through small towns and stops in traditional RPG fashion with overhead maps is nothing new, but the 3D graphics here are



DEEP SEA ADVENTURE

SELL THE TREASURE AND UPGRADE YOUR SUBMARINE!



...and you... go to early 3D games. Playing

through these create mode

works by the accompaniment

of truly awful music. You WILL turn

this off after a few minutes, I guarantee it!

Luckily, when you finally get into the submarine for serious exploration things improve greatly. Huge underwater divers, caves, volcanoes, sunken cities, etc. are all brought to life with plenty of 3D jiggery-pokery. Not the most detailed environments and warp/glitching is commonplace, but each scene does its own unique atmosphere with some subtle, soaking sound effects. The submarine has more functions and the control is very simple. It may seem sluggish at first, but once you have upgraded to a sleeker model expect a marked rise in performances.

Each area has its own look to it and it's a real task to find them.

One stage has you searching on land in a complete villa style property, another has you steaming through a volcano looking for acrete fossils. The only downside here is the lack of pace. The game requires too long to explore objects with long travel across the sea floor looking for mysterious treasures, artifacts, etc. battles with enemy subs and sea monsters are thrilling stuff when you're forced, okay, forced to do it.

Overall, Deep Sea Adventure is an fair entry point game from Tokara. The intriguing storyline, indigenous empires of previous CG and matching graphics are well accepted. If the 2D areas weren't so godawful, Deep Sea Adventure would probably merit your attention. Unfortunately, with RPGs up high on the ground, it just lacks the essential ingredients that could have made it successful against the ever expanding lineup of underwater-action games that are heading our way.



AN ACTION ADVENTURE DEEP UNDER THE OCEAN!

• JAPAN NOW SPECIAL REPORT • PART 2

TOKYO GAMESHOW

GAMEFAN RETURNS TO THE GAME SHOW ONCE MORE TO UNCOVER SEGA'S PLANS FOR THE YEAR AHEAD. YOU CAN DISCOVER THE NEW TITLES FROM SEGA, THE GD NET CREW AND A WEALTH OF HEARTY, THIRD-PARTY SMASH SATURN PRODUCE BY SIMPLY READING THE FOLLOWING TWO PAGES. SIMPLE EH!

• TOKYO GAMESHOW • SEGA

PROJECT SONIC/SONIC JAM • SEGA TOURING CAR • AZEL PANZER DRAGOON RPG • LAST BRONX • TACTICS FORMULA ONE

Despite their rather modestly sized stand, Sega had the busiest booth at the show, with a constant stream of live announcements on stage from the game developers themselves. Throughout the day, the Japanese press were camped at the base of the stage, just waiting for the next event (there was one every 30 minutes).

Undoubtedly the biggest announcement at the show was *Project Sonic*. Mr. Yuji Naka was there to explain about *Sonic Jam* and officially launch the whole project. He did, however, remain tight-lipped as to what the *Sonic Team* were up to at the moment.

Despite having only just started conversion, Sega was eager to announce *Sega Touring Car Championship* for the Saturn. As it's only 5% complete, we were only treated to arcade video footage, and there was no firm word on Saturn-specific features.

Very popular at the show but



MR. YUJI NAKA TALKS ABOUT HIS NEW PROJECT SONIC GAME

not yet playable was *Azel Panzer Dragoon RPG*. A spokesperson from Team Andromeda was on stage to explain the current development status and reveal some of the features that will be in the game. And yet, although they answered many of the questions people had on the game, they created as many mysteries concerning aspects of the game still

not revealed. The booth video played clearly showed the nature of the battle sequences, which the programmers are currently working on, and depicted town stages through which your character could walk.

The most eagerly awaited game at the show was *Last Bronx*. On stage, they showed a specially created live action video of the characters fighting. The 30% complete game was playable at the show, and Sega had several talk shows with the development team. It appears that they may not wish to add any new characters to the Saturn version in fear of spoiling its unique arcade image.

Reflecting the wide variety of game genres Sega is trying to promote, *Culdecopt*, a fantasy simulation game based on the currently fashionable trading card board-game system, was an unexpected addition to Sega's lineup.

Another surprise announcement was that of *Tactics Formula One*.

Despite the similarities of its name, it has no relation to any arcade game, and is in fact a strategic "board game" like racing game. *TFO* allows you to race not by sitting behind the steering wheel but by configuring every aspect of the your car and driver and then watch the results instead.



LAST BRONX WAS THE MOST POPULAR SEGA PRODUCT ON DISPLAY



• QUINTET FOCUS • SOLO CRISIS

Quintet's first Sega Saturn game was finally unveiled in the form of a simulation game. Tomoyoshi Miyazaki from Quintet was live on stage to explain the basic game scenario, but from the limited demo shown it's obvious that development is still at a very early stage. Similar in style to the civilization-building games like *Populous* and *Actraiser*, but using 3D polygons, the basic concept is that you are a god and you control your minions who must develop skills to be able to defeat the devil. The world map

is divided into two worlds, with both your surface world, where the people build, farm and worship you, and the dark world, (below the surface) where the monsters worship the devil. As you are unable to make any direct attack on the devil, you must control your people and instruct them to do all the fighting for you. However, unlike previous games in this genre, you and the devil have opposite worlds which directly affect each other. If the devil builds a mountain in his world, then a valley will appear in

your world. Other such dual-world affecting events occur from the set-elements you build and the actions



of your people. *Solo Crisis* still has a long way to go and we'll keep you posted on developments.



• TOKYO GAME SHOW • GDNET

GAMEARTS • TREASURE • QUINTET • STING • NEVERLAND COMPANY •

The Tokyo Game Show was GDNet's first appearance in public, and they were certainly popular, with a huge line of people trailing around the booth. GameArt had the largest space with a large wall resembling one from a scene in Grandia taking up one whole side of the booth. The only new announcement at the show was that GameArt is working on Gun Grifton 2.

Although it's been in the press for quite some time now, Grandia was still only there on video. However, it did allow us to see for the first time the actual game



GAMEARTS ONLY HAD HOT VIDEO FOOTAGE OF GRANDIA.

engine in operation. Smoothly animated polygons have never looked so good on the Saturn.

Grandia centers around Justin,

a 14-year-old boy who grew up during the 'Golden Age of Exploration,' when people used massive ships to sail the seas and explore uncharted territories. However, times have changed, and the world is now in the 'Age of Industrial Revolution.' Justin lives in the port town Parm, where he often uses an item called the 'Spirit Stone,' a gift given to him by his father. With the Spirit Stone, Justin is carried away into dreams of adventure in an ancient civilization.

Justin's life seems rather boring, until one day when he

accompanies a group of friends on a trip to visit some ancient Salto ruins. While exploring the ruins, Justin and the group sneak into a closed-off cavern, which holds a series of complex rooms and structures. As they explore the strange structure, they come across a room far different than the rest of them. As Justin is walking across the room, his Spirit Stone begins to radiate a strange light, and from inside the stone Justin can hear a strange voice. The voice calls to Justin, leading him into a strange world which will forever change his life.



• GDNET FOCUS • FORTHCOMING TITLES

SLAYERS

EXAMINING OTENOKI STUDIO ALICE

Slayers, the comical fantasy story that is currently very popular in Japan, will soon have an action RPG based upon it. Telling the story of Lina, Gauil, Zalgadis, and newcomer Luke, the game will feature both 3D rendered characters and top-quality animated cinema sequences. The original producers of Slayers are creating new, original animation for this game, and while it won't be based on any specific Slayers episode, it is sure to contain the same kind of humor and personality as the hit anime.

MAGIC SCHOOL LUNAR

EXAMINING OTENOKI STUDIO ALICE

Originally created for Sega's portable Game Gear system, Magic School Lunar will follow in the footsteps of Lunar: Silver Star Story, heading to the Saturn. Just like L-SSS, the graphics and gameplay will be improved to

make use of the Saturn's power, and many new animated cinematics will be added to help build upon the storyline. MSL is more of a side-story to Lunar, but it takes place in the same world and has many connecting references to the main series.

BAROQUE

STING

Baroque will be a very interesting game to watch, because while it's a real-time 3D adventure, it's beginning to look like it will be very different than most of the games currently out there. Sting, the game's designers, mention four key words when emphasizing what makes Baroque different: Multiple-plot, Freedom, Change and Strategy. While many have labeled the game an RPG, it promises to be far more detailed and innovative than your average RPG. The world you explore and the people you meet won't just be things to get you from one place to another. As you interact with the different characters in the game, what you do can change the plot and storyline, having effects on different things. In other words, what you do has consequences, like in real life—a feature long overdue in RPGs. As well, the game looks to be supported with quality visuals, the video on display looking exceptionally good.

SILHOUETTE MIRAGE

TREASURE

One of the few titles playable at the GDNet booth was Treasure's Silhouette Mirage, and the line to get a chance at this new game went on for what seemed like infinity. Silhouette Mirage marks Treasure's second game for the Sega Saturn, and it's an old-style action/shooting game. As always, Treasure has pulled off not only a good deal of fast-paced action, but graphical tricks that will amaze and impress you. Definitely a classic Treasure festival of madness.



CHAOS SEED

NEVERLAND COMPANY

Chaos Seed is a remake of a popular Super Famicom game for the Sega Saturn, released by Neverland Company. The original game was quite a hit for Neverland, so they've done the wise thing and come out with an upgraded version, giving it a new, updated look and feel. Indeed, instead of just porting the game over like many companies are doing, Neverland Company is splicing up the old game. Chaos Seed will receive visual enhancements, a new soundtrack, and a selection of opening and in-game cinema sequences. As well, the storyline will benefit from an overhaul, adding new quests, locations, story elements, and creatures to meet along the way. In addition to its traditional RPG side, Chaos Seed features a dungeon creation feature, and an action engine to protect your creation.



GAMEFAN UP-TO-THE-NOW UPDATE!

Mitochondria:
Millions of years old,
these incredibly tiny life forms
are waiting to revolt.
Quietly...
Inside your cells.

That's Square's storyline blurb for *Parasite Eve*, their latest impossibly-brilliant-looking PlayStation RPG. One thing Square wants to make very clear about *Parasite Eve*, however, is that it is definitely a dual-culture game: it's being made at Square L.A. and has a staff ratio of 3/7; Americans comprise the seven. The main planning staff, however, is Japanese. The game is based (very loosely) on a best-selling Japanese novel of the same name by Hideaki Sena, the

script and game design is by Takayuki Tokita of *Chrono Trigger*, *FFV* and *Live-A-Live* fame, the battles are by Yoshihiko Miskawa, who directed *FFVI* and *Super Mario RPG*, the characters are designed by *FFVII*'s Tetsuya Nomura, and the music is by Yoshi Shimomura, who scored *Super Mario RPG*, *Front Mission* and *Live-A-Live*. The key

Aya Brea (アヤ・ブリーハ) 由
うやべの魔物が犯すあらゆるひじきの。」

American staff members are Steve Gray, who has done CG work for the films *True Lies* and *Apollo 13*, and Darnell Williams, head of Square's American CG section. Most of the other American staff members are in the CG department, and the game's programmers are split down the middle—half Japanese, half American.

Very little is known about the game design, other than that it uses an engine derived from *FFVII*: Pre-rendered backgrounds (apparently in superslick 640x480 this time around, much higher than that of *FFVII*) with polygonal characters. The battle system is the latest incarnation of Square's trademark Active Time Battle System, which first debuted in 1991 with *Final Fantasy IV*. Even less is known about the storyline, except for Square's blurb above and the three main characters: Aya Brea, the hot 25-year-old female detective who appears in all but one of these game shots, her partner Daniel "Bo" Dolis, and a researcher from a Japanese university, Kunihiko Maeda.

Square has also talked about what apparently happens at the very beginning of the game: It's Christmas Eve, 1997, in New York. Aya Brea and her boyfriend are on a date at the opera house. Suddenly, the actors on stage burst into

flame, screams ring out, and confusion reigns. Opera-goers and actors alike make mad dashes toward the exit. One actress remains on stage, laughing scornfully. "Maybe this woman is the perpetrator," thinks Aya, as she raises her gun towards the figure on stage.

"My name is Eve," says the woman.



SQUARE'S



Parasite Eve will be out in Japan this Winter, and Square is working hard to attempt their first worldwide simultaneous release. They plan to sell 1,000,000 copies of Eve in Japan, and anywhere from 1 to 2,000,000 in America. We literally did this page the day our issue closed (truth be told, the day we were meant to be at the printer!), so we're sorry we couldn't include more information. We'll try to get more for next month!



• AZEL •

SEGA • 3D RPG • SUMMER

...the best. **AZEL: Fierce Dragon** is the best. It's an RPG. Of all the shots you have, it's the world map, and even though it's not the best, the graphics are amazing. The graphics are command-based. The number of dragons in **AZEL** is unique. It utilizes a polygon mapping system that's based on a sphere, and at your dragon based in four vectors to which you can assign points Strength, Defense, Invulnerability and Heart Skill. We'll have more hardcore mad tachikines on **AZEL: Fierce Dragon RPG** as soon as possible. Orange orange



• Ra-Bi-To ("Rabbit") •

55 • EA VICTOR • FIGHTING • JUNE



• Willy Wombat •

55 • HUDSON • ACTION • 5/27

He's the best... this blue! It's Wily Worf, the best! He's a Cyber-Mechanic! Wily Worf is a cool-looking robot, built out of metallic-looking metal, he's got the Around-Quintic View system, and he's made of polymers. Through the game, you'll find the backgrounds turn rotated 360°, so you can search for hidden passages, and whether Wily Worf is a unique in that his character designs by Fusuma Matsushita. In the game, Light & Shadow, famous for the design of *Final Fantasy* (Japan's #1 game megahit) himself, Nekky, Mr. Matsushita is also responsible for the awesome character designs in the Moto-Ron Gigahearts.



• Panzer Bandit

PS • BANPRESTO • ACTION • JULY

It's a 3D action game for the PlayStation. It's from the same people who brought us *Crash Bandicoot* and *Jak and Daxter*. Yup. It's *PlayStation All-Stars: The Resistance*, and it's due out in November. The game features a host of PlayStation characters, including Crash, Jak, Daxter, and the Resistance team. The game is set in a futuristic world where the Resistance is fighting against the forces of the Empire. The game features a variety of weapons and vehicles, and the characters are voiced by the same actors who voiced them in the original games. The game is set to be a fun and action-packed game, and it's sure to be a hit with PlayStation fans.



GAMERR 2000

>TORCH YOUR FOES WITH THE AVENGING FLAMES OF GAMERR!!

R REVIEW



PlayStation

REVIEWER: DAVID TIE
PUBLISHER: SEGA
FORMAT: CD
RELEASED: 1/18/97
RECOMMENDED RETAIL PRICE: \$39.99
DEVELOPER: TEAM ANDREW



EVIL BOX

BY DAVID TIE

Let's talk about the Panzer Dragon series. Panzer Dragon, Emu, and Zwei. You know them, you love them. That is, if you're smart, you do. Now, the upcoming Panzer Dragon RPG, Azel, looks like little that has to do with Panzer Dragon. The studio—seen the main staff has admitted that none of them have been with the series longer than a few weeks through Azel's development. *Waaaaaaah!* Why? All of Team Andrew's left Sega to make this game! This game is Panzer Dragon... look at those lookin' square! Look at that radar!

Um... um... actually, I have no idea if what I've just told you is true, but it is food for thought. You see, *Gamerr 2000* is utterly identical to *Panzer Dragon* it's sick. The spinning-around-with-the-LRH-but-nothing thing, the control, the level design, the lookin'-on... it's all here. About the only thing that's not is Panzer's hardcore *Mauschik*-influenced theme, replaced with Japan's big deal (bright, second best



perfectly respectable levels! The effects are hideous, as well; the best lens flare this side of the *M6A* and *Gamer's* flaming plasma balls are especially notable. Also, several levels have multiple paths and multiple mid-bosses—again, very *Panzer*-esque.

Something I haven't yet mentioned are the FMV cinematics, starring very, very bad actors... something one would expect from a B-movie series like *Gamer*. They fit the theme perfectly, but you'll have a hard time understanding some of the dialogue—it's either dubbed horribly or delivered by clearly non-native speakers.

Gamer's techno tunes are also excellent—strangely enough, they're by Taito's sound team Zutata, who have been nothing but a problem of late... but that's just my opinion; don't tell E. Strom, or you may never hear from Evil Box again.

If you're a *Panzer Dragon* fan or a shooter fan in general, there's no reason not to pick up *Gamerr 2000*... a truly unexpected bonus import title. **ER**

>ONLY JACK MORTON AND LISA
MIAHOOCH CAN GET BACK GADS + OBA!!

loved) giant monster, the friend of children everywhere, *Gamer*. Supposedly this current scenario occurs after the last *Gamer* move, *Gamer* vs. *Legion*. Someone has stolen the DNA of *Gamer*'s most popular foe, *Gaos*, and plans to... like, revive him or something. Now it's up to Jack Morton and his sidekick, Dr. Uzia (Mukuneki), to get it back. You fly around in a jet (though there is one level in which you pilot a hoverbike), firing laser blasts, while *Gamer* provides backup and shoots his famous plasma balls at opponents that you've locked onto. Strange that you don't actually *PLAY* as *Gamer*, right? I bet *Gamer* 2000 had nothing to do with *Gamer* before DoCo bought it.

Ho-hum. It's the end of the second text box and I haven't talked about the game. It's a shooter; you shoot things down. As shooters go, it's about average length. The real attraction here is the graphics—they're incredible. One stage has enough diverse and gorgeously modeled locales to comprise five



Although it's a bold statement, Armageddon: Magic the Gathering (influenced by the card game of the same name) just might redefine the way you look at arcade games. Not just because of the property its characters are based on, nor its beautiful graphics, or even its highly competitive and addictive gameplay—but simply by the way each of these elements are perfectly combined.

The idea was simple—create a unique title that would draw people back into the arcades. But with these game-congested areas seemingly dominated by fighting, racing and shooting titles (along with anything that sports an expensive cabinet), Acclaim wouldn't just be hard-pushed to introduce a new type of game into the arcade market; the task looked to be almost impossible. The answer? Create a new type of game that's damn near perfect, an assignment that was given to Acclaim's new in-house arcade development team.

This small group of highly talented programmers and artists took the Magic license and made something incredible. And as in almost every arcade hit, the basic idea behind Armageddon is a simple one. Using the trackball to maneuver a cursor around the arena, you must plant eggs that will eventually grow into small MtG creatures (or if you concentrate on one area, larger beasts), fire "direct damage" at your opponent, or warp out of harm's way to one of five "power points" (which are the only places on the board your character can exist). That's it! Three main actions, three buttons.

The magic behind Armageddon, though, is that this doesn't even begin to describe the actual gameplay. While you're laying your eggs and such, your opponent is not only doing the same thing, but "counter-spelling" your unshielded creatures (by placing an egg on the same spot), and even hitting you with direct damage. Meanwhile, many creatures for both sides have hatched and are trampling towards each player, forcing you to fight them off and/or transport to another area. Suddenly, you notice your army is quickly dwindling, causing you to start laying new eggs...and so this fast-paced and ultimately chaotic symphony of life and death begins again—ending only when your life points expire or the time runs out. And all of this fun running off Acclaim's new 3DFX-powered Epidemic game system, featuring high resolution graphics (640x480), over 15,000 frames of animation (just wait until you see the Blue Mage's flowing pantaloons), and gorgeous color. It's Madness!

As a former avid Magic player, I must admit the idea of an arcade title based around my once-favorite game initially left me a bit disgusted, and the fact it uses a trackball made it even worse. Of course, it only took a few minutes of play time to totally change my mind. This game is going to be hot... Look for a full review as Armageddon's release date nears, currently set for this September.

-Orion

ARMAGEDDON

CHECK US OUT ONLINE AT <http://www.gamefan.com>

QUARTER



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animeFan

NEON GENESIS EVANGELION

Genesis 0:5



Y'know, Rei's not in Gurren 2.5 very much.. we're gonna have 'cause we like her better than Asuka. That's right, but it's Asuka's fault! Rei's hotter than Asuka! (Redgiantcell)

Finally! It's here... Evangelion Genesis 0:5! How long has it been since 0:4? Months! Unfortunately, the massive wait wasn't entirely worth it, as, in my opinion, Genesis 0:5 isn't one of the better tapes in the series.

Still, Episodes 8 (With One Accord in a Flesh/Both of You, Done Like You Want to Win!) and 9 (MAGMADIVER) are without question the wackiest, most comedic episodes in the entire series, and offer a refreshing break from the drama... and from Genesis 0.6 on in, that's practically all Evangelion is.

The tape begins with Episode 9: With One Accord is a *Fush* (an odd translation on AD Vision's part: the original episode name meant something like "In An Instant, Hearts Overlapping"), an extremely wacky episode in which we see the beginnings of Asuka's new life in Japan—being a foreign babe, she's very popular at school. However, the seventh Angel attacks and promptly splits into two, trouncing Units 01 and 02. The UN is able to make the Angel regress into a dormant state with an N2 mind-gleam Asuka and Shinji a few days to undergo *Unison Training* to synchronize with each other so they can attack both Angels simultaneously. After a hilarious montage sequence of Asuka and Shinji attempting to synchronize, we're treated to 62 seconds of godlike animation and music as Units 01 & 02 defeat the Angel in perfect unison.

and 02 defeat the Angels in perfect unison.

Episode 10, MAGMADIVER, is beloved by many, for what reason I can't quite figure out. It's such a popular episode that AD Vision even trumpeted the fact that 0.5 contained in its cover! In my opinion, it's wholly average. Maybe it's so popular because of all the cute Asuka scenes in it ("back roll entry"!) or something. At any rate, in this episode an embryonic angel is discovered in the volcanic Mt. Asama, and Asuka is ordered to retrieve it. Yet by the time her D-type Equipment reaches its maximum depth, the angel still hasn't been found, and the soil is rapidly deteriorating...

And now a quick word about the debuting: It's awful. As dubs go, it's probably one of the better ones, but Shai's whining and Asuka's totally incomprehensible get-really-annoying. Again, I'd really recommend

111

AF_Review

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A





Gude Crest: The Emblem of Gude



Those somehow-familiar (OK, I remember the PC Engine game, but where else have I seen Etsu and Jira?) twin swordswomen, Etsu and Jira, return in *Gude Crest: The Emblem of Gude*, a thoroughly average girls-with-swords adventure. It seems that Etsu and Jira, both orphans from faraway lands, have landed themselves on a slave ship full of children. With their freaky-looking *Vi* (read: Chris) they escape, and in the process get the legendary Gude Crest, which they decide must be returned to its owner. Unfortunately, the Crest belongs to the young Princess Rubella and her brother Julian, who've been captured by an *evil* cult that worships a vicious goddess called the Supreme Mother.

Needless to say, Etsu and Jira smash everything and everyone to save the day.

At first, *Gude Crest* is hard to watch; the character designs are simply poor and everything about the anime seems terribly, terribly old, like you vaguely remember seeing this across while you were little growing into it back in the '80s. In the long run, however, the excellent action/light sequences and the extremely watchable characters of Etsu and Jira themselves win out, and you find yourself at "last" liking *Gude*. It's not one you'll remember forever, but *Gude* is a decent diversion while you're waiting for the next epic. (Speaking of epic, it's time for another epic fantasy anime. Well, *Escaflowne*'s coming, we'll have to wait for that.)



Golden Boy Volume 3



Kintaro Oe, the wonderful, lovable student of life, who travels around to see the world and experience many things (and women). This time around, in *Golden Boy Volume 3*, he finds himself helping out in a small family-owned noodle shop. The owner of the shop has a beautiful daughter named Noriko, and it seems that the lovely Noriko has a suitor, Kogure, who wants to take advantage of her trusting, innocent nature, marry her, and take over her father's noodle shop to turn it into nightclubs. Kintaro accidentally finds this out, and he becomes determined to save the fair Noriko from the clutches of such an evil, two-faced man.

Whereas the previous *Golden Boys* were based around sexy, perverted humor, *Golden Boy Volume 3* is more of a romantic comedy which gets a bit naughty now and then. It's almost as if the creators were trying to clean up *Golden Boy's* image, and while it certainly isn't bad, it's just not the same you're used to. I mean, what would Beavis and Butt-head be if they suddenly stopped drawing things and getting into trouble? Being fair, though, everything else about the show is still just as good. The animation is superb and the English cast does a respectable job.

In the end, I was a little disappointed with GB3. I was expecting to sit down and have a half hour of childhood, guiltless laughs, and while I did have a few moments of uncontrollable laughter, it just wasn't the same. I defiantly recommend seeing it, just don't expect quite the same *Golden Boy*.



Key the Metal Idol Ver. 1



A cold, emotionless, fragile robot, a robot who wants nothing more than to become human. This is Key, the creation of her grandmother, a scientist named Muro Miria. She rushes home from school one day to find her dead, a tape recorded with his dying words the only thing remaining. Her body won't accept her battery until one day runs out, and before that happens, she must complete her grandmother's mission to make her human. The only problem... to become human, she must find and make 30,000 friends.

Thus we are introduced to Key and the strange, almost surreal version of Japan in which she lives. She travels alone, as Key's world is one of meeting as many people as she can. As she arrives, strange events begin to unfold around her; seemingly random at first, but as they occur we get a glimmer of a much bigger picture. What really happened to cause her grandmother's death? What exactly will making 30,000 friends do for Key? And what of the strange idol singer? Key takes such an interest in her that we're prepared to not only stand everything right away.

The one thing that bothered me about *Key* (TM) was Viz's job of subtitled. At a number of points during the show, key characters would talk, and no translation of what they were saying was provided. Still, I'm happy to see *Key* get a US release, and with more companies would release similar titles that have yet to see our shores, such as *Video Girl Al*. Everything about *Key* reminds me of older anime that I was into when I was first becoming a fan, and I welcome it with open arms.



FROM A CAVE DEEP INSIDE AGOURA...



Dear Posty,

Why does GameFan have such a small Saturn section. This is how your issue goes: PS section, small SS section, PS section again, N64 section, and another big PS section. Example: Vol. 5 Issue 5. Come on GameFan, you can do better than that. You're my favorite magazine, but you're not fair!!! Why don't you review better games for the SS section. Not *Duke Nukem 3D*, *Quake*, and especially not *Manx TT*. Review something like *Grandia* or *Airs Adventure*. Last question, why is PS coverage of a game sometimes bigger than the SS coverage of the same game, like *Fighting Force* or *Tomb Raider*? Thanks for listening.

Evans Cade
West Palm Beach, Florida.

Ok, I've received literally HUNDREDS of letters from disgruntled Saturn owners along these lines, and the truth may sting a little. The simple fact is: Saturn doesn't get as much coverage as PS because THERE AREN'T AS MANY SATURN GAMES COMING OUT! Honestly. There's no conspiracy at work here. I love my Saturn dearly, as do most of Team GameFan. But when we don't get sent the games, there's nothing we can do about it. It's no secret that Saturn is struggling in the US and as a result less and less games are getting released. Companies like Shiny, Core and Atlus have stopped producing Saturn games. Doesn't that tell you something? Now,

wouldn't say the Saturn's ready to give up the ghost quite yet, but it's definitely becoming more of a niche market (in the US at least).

Oh yeah, your comments regarding *Duke Nukem 3D* and *Quake* are reprehensible. They're two of Sega's biggest exclusives, not to mention fantastic games in their own right. Play them before you pass judgment. And *Manx TT* not bad either.

Finally, the reason we gave PS Fighting Force and Tomb Raider more coverage than the SS versions was because Sony paid us. Just kidding. It was because the PS versions were more complete.

Dan Uber Postmeister,

Did he just say what I think he just said? I had to go back and play through two hours of game just to see the sequence again. Yes he did. Diego said s**t. Wow. Now let me set this up for you. It happens during one of the most climactic scenes in a game that thrives on a great story line. The characters in the party of Vandal Hearts are at a complete loss; their last hope of survival is gone. What else is there to say?

Language in videogames is an issue that needs to be dealt with. I would like to start this discussion by congratulating Konami for sticking with this bold move. They kept the M17+ rating and risked taking in a smaller profit for the good of the game. Now I'm not radical.

I wouldn't dare say kill all the kiddo games and bring on the 'mature' sex, gore and profanity. I wouldn't expect Mario or Crash to break into a Tarantino dialogue. Each game has its own tone (or cuteness level). There is a time and place for profanity and what Diego said perfectly summed up their situation. Let me give you an example to prove how appropriate profanity can be. You can not tell me that you all didn't mind dishing out \$7 to see *Star Trek: Generations* after hearing Data say exactly the same thing. It fit so damn perfect. What do you think? Thanks for your time, Erik Jakobsen
San Pedro, CA

What do I think? I think you're a sad man for playing through two hours of game just to watch a character say s**t. As for profanity in videogames? **** it, why the **** not?

Dear Postmeister,

First off, I'd like to say that out of all the gaming mags, I think that GameFan is the best. I also like the info you've been giving us readers on *FFVII*. Here are my questions:

1. Are there going to be any selectable characters in *TR2* besides Lara?
2. How many selectable characters will be *RE2* and who are they?
3. When is *Tobal 2* coming to the US?
4. I just got *Need For Speed 2* in May and it wasn't supposed to come out until June or July. Why did I get it so early?
5. I heard that there is going to be a PS game that is a combination of *FF1*, *FF2* and *FF3* built into one game. Is this true? If so when is it coming out?
6. What is the storyline for *FFVII*? Is Cloud the main character?
7. How much do you get paid? Well, that's it. Thanks.

Paul Aguilar
Barstow, Ca.

1. It's not confirmed, but there are rumors that you may be able to play as other explorers. The PC version is said to be networkable.

2. The two we know of so far are Elza (a motorcycle champion) and Leon (a police officer). Since the game's going through a total reworking, it's possible there will be more.

3. Square and Sony have both stated that they have no plans to release *Tobal 2* over here. Insanity if you ask me.

4. SO IT WAS YOU WHO BOUGHT IT!!!

I was wondering what sad, disturbed individuals were keeping that *turd* at the top of the charts and *now* I know. Paul, you should be ashamed of yourself. I suppose it was you who bought *WCW vs. The World and Cruiser's USA* as well?

5. Square recently released *FF4* on PS in Japan, and there was talk of 5 and 6 following. But nothing on 1, 2 or 3. Sorry. 6. When the game starts all you know is that you're playing an ex-soldier named Cloud who is chasing a character called Sephiroth. That's it. To tell you any more would ruin the game. 7. What's 'paid'?

Dear Mr. Meister,

Fighting games have been all the rage these past few years. I can remember when *Street Fighter 2* first came out way back and people used to crowd the machine. I was awed by the graphics and excitement of that game, and was one of the first people to get a copy when it came out for Super Nintendo. Now, over half a decade later, people are still clamoring over fighting games. I, however, have changed in my opinion. I cannot figure out why people continue to play these games: they're all the same! All the companies do is improve the graphics and sometimes add another button. No originally whatsoever. Wow, in *Battle Arena Toshinden* you can actually 'move around' in a '3D environment.' Big deal, still looks like the same fireball throwing, beat every character and fight the boss type game to me.

Speaking of SF, why have ALL the SF games been huge hits? I don't understand. Why do people love to play the same games over and over? The same can be said for *MK3* and its 'upgrades.' I don't care about pixel size or animation rate, the whole fighting game concept is getting very old. How many fireballs does someone have to throw before he gets it? Although there are hundreds, if not thousands, of fighting games out there, I still consider there to be only two: the fireball *Street Fighter*-type game and the hand-to-hand *Virtua Fighter*-type game. Two games made into a thousand by changing things slightly to make a quick a buck. People always look at me like I'm crazy when I say that fighting games stink, so I thought I'd write this letter to express the reasons for my opinion.

Thank you very much for reading,
Gibson Yen.

Silver Spring, MD

You raise some interesting points, though personally I think you're being a bit harsh. Yes, fighting games are very similar, but then most games within the same genre usually are. That's the whole point of a genre: building on a set of established parameters. It just so happens that in the case of fighting games, SF2 laid down those parameters. If you're looking for something a little different, try *Tekken 2*.

Dear Posy,

I am a devoted PlayStation and *Street Fighter* fan. I couldn't be more happy when I heard that *X-Men Vs Street Fighter* wouldn't be a Saturn exclusive, and I think it's a good (place-your-life-on-it) bet that SF3 will be released on PlayStation in '98. However, I have a problem with Sony's controller. It wasn't good for *SFA2* and I can't picture it being any better on *X-Men Vs SF*. Are there any third-party PlayStation controllers with a 3x2 or 4x2 layout and a decent d-pad? Jonathan 'The Palpatine' Randolph
Phoenix, AZ

I hate to be the one to burst your bubble, Jonathan, but Capcom **STILL** hasn't announced *SE vs X-Men* for the PS. As far as we know, it's still a Saturn exclusive. And when you see how much animation they had to cut out of *Marvel Super Heroes* to fit it on PS, it's easy to realize why. Bottom line: If you want to play the most accurate versions of Capcom's 2D fighters at home, you're gonna have to bite the bullet and get a Saturn with RAM cart. As for SF3, we've heard that it's being converted to home systems for a fourth quarter release this year, but we're not 100% sure. Oh yeah, Evil Fox recommends a *Horiz* 68 fighting pad. Whatever that is.

SAILOR MOON-OMETER!

Nearly every letter I get these days has some mention of Sailor Moon, be it good or bad. So here, for the first time, is the Sailor Moon-ometer, representing what portion of SM mentions are positive versus negative.



VENUS LOVE AND BEAUTY SHOCK TO ALL!

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INTERACT STUFF

NINTENDO DD64 INFORMATION!

It's been confirmed that yes, the DD64 (Disk Drive 64) will be released in Japan this December. The DD64 will retail for 12,800 Yen (\$99.00) and the games will cost between 4800yen and 5800yen (\$42 to \$52), roughly the same price as a PlayStation game in Japan. The DD64 holds 64 Megabytes of data, which with compression can be optimized to 100 Megabytes. It has faster access time than a 5x speed CD player, and comes complete with a modem jack for instant telecommunication. Another new addition is the clock and calendar function as found in the Saturn.

3 games will launch this year in Japan with the DD64: *Mother 3*, *Mario Kart 64* and *Sim City 64*, possibly even *Pocket Monsters 64*. There are said to be over 20 third party DD64 games in development in Japan, while Nintendo has over 15 games including *Zelda 64*, *Super Mario RPG 64*, *Dream Star 64* (not to be confused with the cart version), *SimCopter*, *Killer Instinct 3* and *Ultra Donkey Kong (DKC64)*.

RUMBLE IN THE PAD!

Here's a list of games currently set to be compatible with the Rumble Pack!

Chameleon Twit
Clay Fighter 63 1.0
Fishing
F-Zero 64
Hyrule No Ken Twin
Sonic Wings Assault
Top Gear Rally
Wild Choppers

RUMBLE THIS!

Wild Choppers was actually delayed (it's fallen from its scheduled May 23rd release to the unknown list in Japan) because the producer thought the pack worked so well with StarFox, they've decided to go back and re-do parts of WC to interact with the Rumble Pack.

SEGA STUFF

Last Bravoz will be coming on Nov 1 but 2 CDs! No word on why Sega has added the 2nd disk but rumor has it's a memorabilia thing filled with pictures and movies. The super-bouncy *Dead or Alive* will be released for Saturn in September (in Japan) and Tecmo has told me that a sequel is also in development.

AM2 is said to be working on two versions of *Virtua Fighter 3*: one version that uses the upgrade and another version without. The upgrade is said to be either a 64bit CPU or a RAM upgrade similar to what Sega wanted to do on the Genesis with the 32X. Sega has unofficially told us that VF3 will be at the E3; perhaps not in playable form but rather on video.

Good news for Sonic fans. There is much talk of Sega making a Sonic racing game (*Sonic Kart!*) for the Saturn and that it will be released later this year.

We have some more info on Sega's new system the Dural Black. *Beta/Saturn-2/Giga*

Drive/take your pick! The polygon count is still between 1 to 2 million. MicroSoft is making the OS, 3DFX is making the graphics chip, the CPU is based on the SH4 200 MHz chip, the sound chip is based on Creative's AWE 32 sound card and the machine will ship with between 16 and 32 megs of RAM. Currently the hardware is in the hands of Sega developers only—3rd parties won't receive development stations for approx 3 to 5 months.

There's talk of Model 4 appearing as early as next year! Sega is apparently increasing their efforts in response to Konami's Cobra hardware which can crank out 5 million polys a second. But let us not forget, Yu Suzuki said that *Virtua Fighter 4* would be the first Model 4 game...

And finally, Sega may be dropping the price of the Saturn in the US to around \$129 or even cheaper sometime in the next 2 to 4 weeks.

NAMCO

Namco has confirmed that they will be showing AN ALL NEW side at this year's E3. The game, developed in their US offices, will be the main attraction at their stand and will be released in the US first. Namco has also told us that *Tekken 3* will NOT be released in the US this year, although it will be in Japan. Also *Tekken 4* is not currently in development because the Tekken team are hard at work making *Tekken 3* for the PlayStation. So when PS *Tekken 3* is finished the team will start work on the follow-up.

INTERACT INTRODUCES V3 WHEEL FOR PS AND N64

Substance D just got back from beautiful Monterey, CA, home of the Laguna Seca Racetrack where Interact were hosting a day of racing at Skip Barber's famous race driving school. Debuting their new V3 Racing Wheel for the PS and N64 (PC version to follow), Substance D and several other members of the press were allowed to experience the thrill of racing an open-wheel, open-cockpit



Formula Dodge around one of the world's best race tracks (in racing suit and helmet, no less). Following this awesome day of racing, we were given a hands-on test of their new analog wheel, the V3. Both N64 and PS versions tilt, extend, offer fully reconfigurable buttons and sensitivity, have detachable foot pedals, and multi-position operation. The N64 V3 adds a Y axis control slider for vertical movement and a memory slot slot—

The V3 worked beautifully with *Rego Racer* and was only so-so for *Mario Kart 64*, simply

because it was almost impossible to do a proper power slide with the wheel. I suspect that games like the upcoming *Top Gear Rally* and *Rev Limit* will be far more suitable. Look for the V3 in July at a very reasonable street price of around \$50 bucks. Extra special thanks to Michael, Melissa, and Jason at Interact for setting up the day of racing and to everyone at Skip Barber's school for making it a total blast.

LITTON DEVELOPS PROTOTYPE... GLASSES-FREE 3D!

The dream of glasses-free 3D took one step closer to reality as Litton Industries unveiled their new, autostereoscopic 3D display. Developed in conjunction with Autostereo Systems of Cambridge, England, and Infinity Multimedia, their new technology offers a motion-parallaxized, stereoscopic 3D display with no glasses required. The way it works is quite technical, far too much so to condense into anything meaningful, but I've seen it, and it works. (Almost cooler than seeing depth was the ability for several independent images to be shown on one display (also the key to the depth). By moving only inches to one side or the other, the on-screen image would completely change. Imagine playing multiplayer Doom Deathmatch on one screen! Expect to see arcade applications in about a year and apparently, some big names have approached Litton about utilizing their technology. A few years down the road, look for 3D PC monitors.

THE MERGER'S OFF!

The merger between Sega and Bandai is off! How 'bout that!! It seems mid level management over at Bandai got a tad shaken not stirred when Sega told them... about the 64X!!! Yee-gads, not again!! (Just kidding) Actually, Bandai requested a cancellation of the merger and offered a business alliance instead, which Sega accepted. Employees at the toymaker were nervous about the change of environment, among other things. But when the President's Tamagotchi mysteriously bit the big one, that was it!!! "The deal's off!!" he cried. (I'm kidding again.)

SONY

Sony has confirmed that the PlayStation will be reduced in price to \$99 by no later than July. Square has stated that they will not be releasing *Tobal 2* here in the US (let's hope someone else picks up the rights). *Front Mission 2* will be coming to the PS sometime next year, while *Tomb Raider 2* is rumored to be an exclusive title for the PS similar to Square's *FF* deal. Sony has just recently released their \$1000 DVD player with Mpeg 2. The Mpeg 2 chip in the DVD player was designed by Sony and may appear in the inevitable next Sony game console, which by the way, Sony will not introduce until the time is right. If all this talk about the next Sony console makes you nervous (as it does me), don't worry, everything you hear is pure spec-

ulation at this point and SCE assures us it's a ways off. Somewhere deep inside Sony R&D they are certainly working on new technology but, uh, I doubt they'd like, feel the need to leak it. We're talkin' mid '99.

FINAL ROUND

- Rumors are flying around that *Phantasy Star 5* is in development for Saturn. Sega would neither confirm nor deny its existence...
- The sequel to *Pygmy's* *Formula 1, Formula '97*, will be at the E3.
- The Neo-Geo 64 will be released at the end of this year in Japan for under \$500. Many more games will be available at launch and sell up in the air, but expect *Samurai Shodown* 64 to be among the first. Games will be released on CDs and we have word that new sequels to both *King of Fighters* and *Real Bout* are already in production.
- Acclaim is making *WWF's Raw Is War* for the Nintendo 64. This version of the game, which is also being made for the PlayStation, will be polygonal. *Raw* will debut at E3 and should be out by the end of the year.
- Sources at Nintendo say that Nintendo of Japan's R&D 2, the creators of *Mario Kart*, are making a 3-D fighting game.
- Rumors are floating around that the next *Crash* game (after *Crash 2*) may be a kart racing game similar to *Mario Kart 64*: *Crash Kart!!!*
- Capcom's Yoshiki Ohnomo, has stated that the company is examining the possibility of putting *Resident Evil* on a 128-megabit N64 cartridge! They may even change the theme from horror to ninja (with booby traps, etc). Speaking of *Resident Evil*, look for *Resident Evil Dash* (RE remix) to make an appearance at E3.
- For all you *Tamagotchi* lovers, Bandai is making *Tamagotchi* for the DD64 sometime next year. No word on a release date.

Working Designs and GameFan Bury the Hatchet!

We would like to take this opportunity to lay to rest once and for all the issue regarding our Lunar review in Volume 3 Issue 10 (October '95). Though we loved the game (and still do), the US version which the editorial was based on was played for only 12 hours (less than 1/3 through) when the review was written. Upon completing the game, we have realized that the translation overall was excellent, and hereby would like to apologize to everyone at Working Designs for the misunderstanding which ensued. We look forward earnestly to bringing our readers quality coverage on all of Working Designs' upcoming titles, which now include PlayStation games!

IT'S TIME TO GET A GRIP PEOPLE...

Reality Quest's The Glove, a next generation controller incorporating natural finger button action and state-of-the-art wrist-motion sensing technology, recently made its way onto my nimble controller hand. Although the prototype still had a few bugs, I must admit, it is a rather cool sensation actually pointing where you want to go with a flick of the wrist, buttons tucked neatly at each finger's end. Advanced techniques (exhibited by the inventor himself) included insane combos, as he'd actually turn his wrist to mimic the fireball motion! (It's like, you're the d-pad!) Could this be the way we'll play games in the future? Well, RQ sure hopes so. We'll review The Glove as soon as we get our hand on a final. Look for a PS version to hit 4th quarter '97 with an N64 version close behind.



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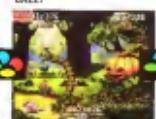
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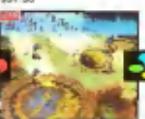
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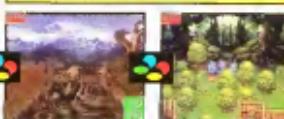
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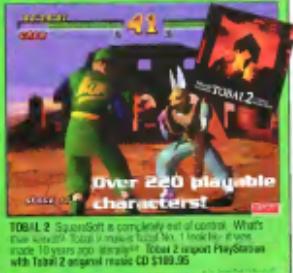


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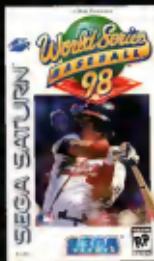
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